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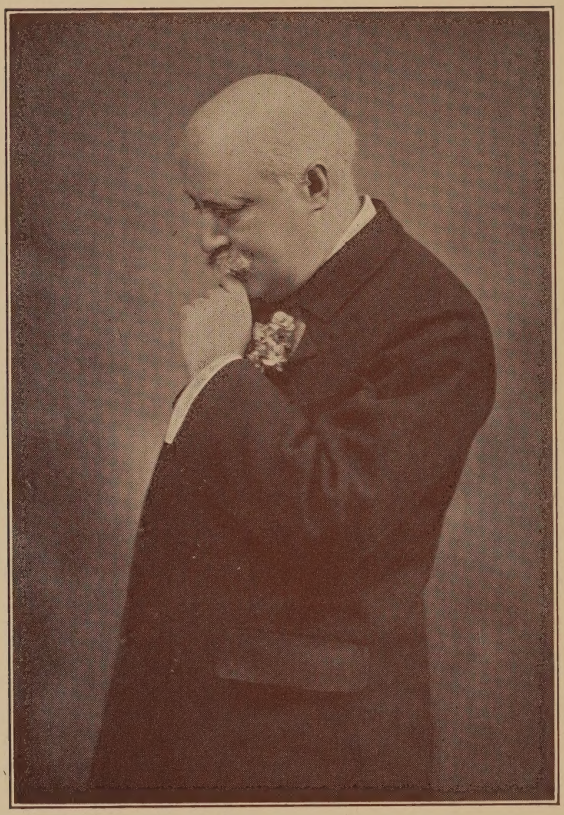

SIR HUBERT PARRY

TWO WITNESSES

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A PERSONAL RECOLLECTION
OF HUBERT PARRY AND
FRIEDRICH VON HÜGEL

by

GWENDOLEN GREENE

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PART ONE

HUBERT PARRY

I will love the beauty of thy house, and the place where thy glory dwelleth.

PSALM XXV.

This is the day the Lord hath made: let us be glad and rejoice in it.

PSALM CXVII.

God is a Spirit, and they that worship Him must worship Him in spirit and truth.

ST. JOHN IV.

I

PREAMBLE

Suffering the Food of Love

For some people life is full of suffering; they seem born into it, and from the beginning they learn its sad reality.

There seems no place for them in this mixed world, and they pass through it strangely; they cannot explain what they mean.

Others are called to sufferings of another sort. They lose what they love most, or they see terrible happenings that shatter their whole lives; or they must endure to watch the slow destruction of a loved soul.

No one escapes suffering of some kind: trials are tightly packed into our daily lives; we must make decisions that are difficult, and there are relinquishments and transitions that cause us pain. Disappointments and disillusions confront us all, inevitable divisions and separations that wound our souls. We suffer in mind and body, and not only for ourselves, but there is a sharing in suffering, that we cannot and must not avoid. And there is a curious equality in this life of suffering, that seems to level us all down to the same pitch. For the load that appears so

trifling to one, I notice, may cost another all she has.

How much wisdom and patience, how much courage and love we need, to deal with all of these! Even the bluntest cannot escape a touch of sorrow in sympathy for all the pain he sees.

In the sum total of human life, happiness may outweigh sorrow, yet, in this confused disordered world, we see so much of loneliness, so much of wistful pain, that we lose the memory even of sheer happiness, or we feel that happiness is but an earlier condition in which souls stay and wait till God calls.

The whole human family, the mysterious life of creatures, all have to accept suffering; we are bound into it, as into some sort of web.

We are thus joined together in a great chain of suffering that no one escapes; we should not even want to escape a heritage so universal, but rather desire to be joined tight into this common life.

But suffering is not the end; it is not as some dead obstinate lump, nor is it a hard will irrationally imposed upon us from without. No, suffering seems to contain a kind of magical life; it is as a divine food through which we grow. Suffering translates, suffering transforms—it accomplishes in ourselves a marvellous secret work.

We cannot explain the work that suffering does—the being within us works unseen—but if we look closely into our past lives, and into the lives of those

we know, we see a mysterious and utterly real thing happening.

For this suffering, interwoven as it is into all we are and do, has been, we discover, our greatest blessing, a process of slow enlightenment—even, in the end, our real deliverance.

For suffering is almost our greatest educator, and accepted unself-occupied suffering opens up wide fields of a new country for us; makes a different kind of vision, accomplishes a true *volte-face* in our lives.

We want to suffer, then, as our purification and hope; we want to gain the understanding, the sympathy, that its power gives. We want to receive the burning touch that strikes us alive—as God touched the lips of Isaiah with a burning coal.

So this suffering that we so fear and dread is not a disaster, it does not necessarily limit our lives; more truly it expands. It is rather a sort of opportunity, or possibility, for us; suffering even seems the food of love. And we come to hunger for this food, for it joins us together as nothing else can. Having suffered, we cannot leave others to lonely sufferings, we have to stay with them, for we understand. For we have not only to enter the arena ourselves, but we have to endure for other souls; we have to stay beside those who suffer blindly; to hold tight in ourselves their lightless pain.

We cannot hide ourselves away, nor shut the doors

of our pity, unless we are to become fruitless, utterly unreal, and dead.

We need the contact of suffering, the enlarging view of difference : we need the struggle with self and with sin : we need to suffer painful antagonisms, we need all the things that hurt.

We do not suffer for nothing, for only so do we learn of the beauty and reality of love, only so do we see the form in whose image we want to be made.

" They have pierced my hands and my feet—they have numbered all my bones." How these words call to us, as an invitation in our everyday lives ! as an explanation of the sufferings we must endure humbly, in each member—as in mind, heart, and soul, for our daily bread.

Only a few can have learnt the true place of suffering, the real fruitfulness of struggle, in their first youth. We looked then outwards and forwards, accepting whatever came without question ; wholeheartedly suffering whatever we had to endure. Only in later years we naturally look back, compare, examine, count the cost, and gather up the experience that has given us different eyes. For the things we think so valuable now had not then emerged. We felt older people strange and out of touch with reality ; they seemed, in fact, filled with arbitrary notions of what mattered, fussing about things of no importance, imprisoned in their tiresome grooves.

We longed to strip everything bare, to obliterate

all the obscuring leaves that seemed almost to hide our naked tree. How should we see any need for hampering conventions? How understand the value of the very things that confine? How know, indeed, what the depth of a conviction can be?

Youth lives exteriorly, generously, abundantly; age lives from within (or should do), practising what it has learnt through experience, through its very years. And youth has a significance, a sincerity, a hope, that the world requires. Youth desires to jettison all cargo, to start straight from the mark in navies of a new design; free of all encumbrance, unhampered by the weight of corporate experience, the age-long knowledge and emotion, that seem but prejudiced convention at the beginning of our lives.

But if we are really honest, and can truly put ourselves back to where we were, feeling again as we felt at seventeen, we see how much we have lost, as well as what we have gained; and we want to consolidate our gains, give a solid foundation to what consciously and unconsciously we have learnt. We have to recognise, too, the great and inevitable *losses*, as well as the faults, of old age.

We hear so much condemnation of youth—the clamour of old age is so loud—that sometimes one asks oneself in terror: "Is this becoming an old persons' world?" How terrible a question, for how terrible a world! But one is consoled; for in reading old memoirs or histories we see that it was always the same.

Age condemned youth for riding at a different hour, or walking in a different hat, in the days of Juvenal.

We are often told to look at older people, to learn from them things that, in this hurried life, we may forget. They are held up as our patterns to copy ; yet there is no intrinsic worth in this observing, there is no special value in old age ; people are not wonderful *because* they are full of years. The wonderful old people we have known stand out in a kind of singleness ; their greatness holds them as something apart : we dare not hope to be as these, they shine as planets clearly separate among the stars.

More often then we look at older people, humbly wondering how we may escape where they so obviously fail. For, as just the average, we long to avoid the narrow outlook, the judging mind ; the passion for seeing sins in a difference of opinion ; the pouncing on trifles with a horrid joy, and the complete certainty that all is wrong that is different from ourselves. How to escape all this is what concerns me !

For we are never free from falling into the Pharisaical sins, and I see no human being on whose pattern I want to be made. Even in these words I feel the touch of a Pharisee.

And alas ! Youth and age *are* separated, we cannot be as we once were ; but we want to get closer to youth again, not to underline what separates.

If I really remember and reflect on what I was at seventeen, I find we were much the same as young

people are now. We were filled with the same antagonisms, the same indignations; even the very words we used then we hear now. We were not so intelligent, nor so bold; we had perhaps more reverence (some might call it fear) of older minds. So we were more silent, hid away in our thoughts, our differing selves. But we had far less knowledge of human nature, far less of ourselves; the questions we hear discussed so much now—sex, marriage, divorce, and all sorts of human relationships and entanglements—did not interest us then, for they had not entered our minds as questions at all. The experience that life has given us should have brought us the sympathy and understanding to bridge all this change. We have to make up, as older people (in another, a different, way), for the daring of youth's hope, for their radiant generosity, their trusting love. Once that same hope filled our every day. We want to live truly in a *young* world, in the living minds that desire to make all things clear. We want to understand without patronising, for why should we patronise? No patting-on-the-back sympathy, no amused tolerance of youthful hopes and desires. No, no, the very things they feel, we felt, and were we not utterly real? Was not our personality then, as now, deeply significant to ourselves? And do they not stride on, far ahead of us? Are they not so many reawakenings to us in our old age?

Let our experience then change us, but change us

so that we learn to understand, to tolerate, even to love, what in our youth we might impatiently ignore or fastidiously dislike; let us recognise that youth has the desire, the hope, and the power (and rejoice in this knowledge) to make new worlds. Let us somehow remain young, while old, tolerant and open, aware of how little we count: and let us reflect how terrible would be an old persons' world!

There is nothing in human nature that cannot be altered, really nothing that cannot be achieved; we *need* not be closed in, narrow, and judging in our old age. We have to grow different, and though the change we effect may be slow—almost infinitesimal—yet all change counts; and over and over again we see how false is the proverb that the leopard cannot change his spots.

So we must remember the vision, the vitality, of youth, that believes and hopes it can purify the world of its muddy stain; and we can gain from their hope a certain measure of humility. For how poor we are beside their richness, how full of prudence beside their unworldly generosity! A little breath from their abundant life can even quicken our fading tree.

So it is sometimes of value, I think, to reflect on, and to recollect, even ourselves, our childhood, and our youth. We can gather up again periods of life that we have forgotten, beauties that have been illuminations; revelations whose actual occasions have passed away.

There are fragments, too, of other lives that have touched us, special influences, things that have lit whole spaces of our lives. We can gather these together in this recollecting, holding them close to us once again. For their life can reach us and inspire us, is part in us, even here and now.

In my own life, the chief of these is my father, Hubert Parry, who in our childhood and youth stood pre-eminent and alone as both the loved centre and the training-ground of our lives. His was the spirit to whom we owed our first recognition of loveliness, the first intimations of beauty spoke to us through him. Perhaps children are specially sensitive to the operations of beauty; we are not closed in nor hardened into an everyday commonplaceness then; but the lightest touch opens our eyes to an enchanted world.

And my father's spirit was as a flying wind, blowing over these early days; filling them with warmth and glow, and an actual delight. So great was his love of romance and adventure, so strong his sense of point, that he made, for us children, a life of most special happiness. His spirit led us; he it was who showed us those clouds of glory that encompass the material world; and the sun shone on these the more brightly because his love for them was so uniquely pure.

And with a vigorous impulsiveness and spontaneity that was so specially marked, my father combined

and demanded of himself a great austerity; he never transgressed his sense of moderation, never emotionalised clear happiness, never sought to enjoy in any excess. He never tried to seize, and to hold as a right, those pleasures which are (as Baron von Hügel has said) but the fringe of our dress; rather his intense enjoyment lived in this ordered moderateness.

In his personal life, as in his music, this kind of purity and singleness was a characteristic element; and as children he showed us quite clearly, though with few exhortations or wordy explanations, that the great things he loved so deeply were the things for, and by which, he lived.

He suffered in a conscious difference of spirit, in an aloneness and separation from his fellows, that sometimes he seemed hardly able to bear. During whole days his being would become clouded; he seemed as though he was battling with some deep inward pain. Yet he would never hang back, never hesitate to throw himself out of such deep depressions; he was always eager to follow and enter into a different life, embrace another atmosphere. His suffering was thus continually wrestled with, forgotten, transformed by his will; and emerged for us in a living sympathy, a boundless kindness and love.

In his family life he entered into every doing, every happiness or calamity, with a fondness that sympathised in everything, giving to us that real understanding that we desire and seek. Even in our child-

hood we were keenly influenced by his delight in living, happy in his utter unworldliness ; and we could not fail to see the goodness that shone almost objectively out of his face.

His life was a true force, an immense inspiration, that never wearied, as he never thought of self.

Today, if one tries to grasp his characteristic significance, to hold what he specially meant to us as a person, one is baffled by the clumsy heaviness of words.

For one cannot express the joyful springing of his spirit, as one cannot catch and hold the mote of sunlight that dances on our walls. He has part in an elusive beauty that darts away from us ; a lighted spirit dwells in him, in a swift identity, that for ever escapes our clutching hands.

In remembering my childhood, I see how clearly this spirit emerges, living so close beside us, yet fed by other sources, secret streams we do not know. We cannot name the world his spirit dwelt in, nor say what it was. But we could see the glimpses of its reality in the smile that lit his face.

At the moment of his death some small bird in the garden beneath his window burst into one clear enraptured phrase of song. It seemed as though his pure spirit found its echo in that singing, mysteriously joining in its clear call ; and, leaving us, entered another kingdom, joyfully soaring far beyond these clouds.

The call to suffer comes sooner or later to everyone; and those who are merely happy, in a natural sense, seem as those labourers in the parable who waited to be hired. For they have not yet entered into their kingdom, our Lord has not yet called to their souls. We love the purely happy people rather as we love children; but they remain outside, we do not need them nor go to them in our troubles, for they have still to find their centre, they have not endured the scorching fire.

Through Christianity we learn about suffering, we learn how it may be utilised; we may learn even how we may suffer well. For Christianity alone embraces suffering, looks it bravely in the face, welcomes its call, sees its transforming power. Yet there are always sufferings that daunt us, mysterious dreadful things that have no redress; wounds that come as arrows of chance, sorrows that hold no secret value that we can trace. All these belong to the inscrutable order, the mysterious law that we see always operating: the law that shows us that in the main the good always suffer for the less good; and great reforms are achieved through the suffering of perhaps one individual, just as we achieve our own deliverance through pain. The unrecorded acts of heroism, the sacrificed lives of daily drudgery, the marvellous forbearing love that recognises no hope beyond the grave—what do these sufferings achieve for us? What glory is sufficient to give to all of these?

There seems but one way to surmount suffering, to forget self, to try to suffer for and with others—to yearn to give all that we have and are for those souls who suffer everywhere, and for those whose sufferings we do not see. To accept suffering thus takes away all its bitterness; to hold it close in ourselves, to consecrate it for God, takes away its sting. Suffering, then, becomes a revelation to us, not a disaster; it carries its secret life of hope, and pressed tight to ourselves, it wears a crown—a crown of thorns.

We need all the hope and faith and courage in our souls, we need all we possess to follow what God declares: yet God Himself works with us, gives us the power to transform and spiritualise our natural selves, covers with His wings the faults and frailties of our nature, and gives a secret power to the simple souls who follow His will, and suffer in close identity with His love.

There are people to whom we run inevitably in our suffering; they are not so particularly clever, but they are wise. They do not say much, but our hearts open naturally with them, we know we shall receive the sort of understanding, the kind of sympathy we desire. We shall not be silenced by another point of view, nor chilled by worldly arguments; nor shall we receive advice that tells us to seek this or that as our right and due. No; the people we seek have suffered, so they are different; they contain a strength and

peace in themselves, a tranquillity that has somehow grown into their personality. They have a long sight that looks beyond these voices and sees truth.

To the spiritually unlearned we cannot speak of spiritual things; there is no meeting-place, the very start is too different for us to find a common ground. To the ordinary individual a religious person seems rather mad; and all our efforts are useless to enlighten those whose eyes are shut—we cannot bring light to the blind.

Yet thinking of God clears the way to Him, the path towards Him opens out at our thought; He never hides from those who seek Him truly, but rather makes fresh ways to reach Him, different for each soul. Such strange things may call a soul to God, often almost unrecognisable things lead to Him; things we cannot understand end in Him.

Religion is both a consolation and a desolation; it is a disturbing factor, an immense and growing life in which no one remains for ever consoled.

When so great a thing touches us, its touch gives us pain; it strengthens, but it strengthens to demand more. From him to whom much has been given, much is required. We have but to look, and we see that this is so. And how right it is! For God cannot show Himself to us for nothing; He cannot bestow so great a grace without our corresponding in some fashion of sacrifice. The soul, once touched by His divine spirit, cannot rest, for how could she? She has

received a fiery spear in herself from which she never escapes.

She has no choice henceforward in what she does, but enters into an isolation, some sort of different life encompasses her; and she sees, in part, sinlessness—and this in our imperfect human life is a great pain.

The soul seems to plunge for ever into these fresh darknesses, losing touch with all she knows; she keeps no hold on the things that are familiar, the very love she knew is brushed away. She sees no love, for love is unrecognisable.

It seems as though souls in their journey of purification towards God are obliged to pass through a chain of deaths; there is a kind of opening and shutting of doors. They enter new states, endure in unknown degrees, enter tombs that are as hidden purgatories. They must lose all they have, forget what they are, before they can receive an ascended life in God. We see, here and there, the individuals who are called to conflicts like these. We recognise the love they gaze on by its reflection in their lives, and we guess something of the pain and tension in which they live. They are witnesses for us, and prepare the ways of the Lord, making His paths straight.

My father's spirit belonged to this heroic throng, and his witness was none the less real because it was silent, because he did not definitely affirm whence came his hope, or from what source was the faith that moved his soul.

He told us we must live in an endeavour to make things better for our fellows; like Blake, he thought to build a new Jerusalem here. We must endure, he said, for the sake of the world; and this conception he held to the last, never shrinking from its austere demandingness, nor hiding from himself its solitary pain.

His life's inspiration lay in those indestructible principles, those great incentives that suggest and mean so much to us—love, beauty, joy. These things in man seem as our clues to God, and their eternal life is our testament of hope.

II

MY FATHER IN THE LIFE OF A CHILD

THE first thing in my life that I can remember is throwing my boot at my nurse, and the next its instant result in catastrophe, and a sense of my being from henceforth an outcast in the family. For with this act I seem to have started my outrageous childhood, when I spent most of my time in tears, in punishments without number, in hours shut in the boxroom, in permanent disgrace.

My next memory is of being allowed to go and see the workmen after the dinner my father gave them when they had finished building our new house in the country. We were allowed to go round the downstairs rooms, walking unsteadily on the brick courses before the floors were put in. The smell of the damp plaster and the brick dust is in my head yet. After that comes the memory of our house in London, at Phillimore-Place, where my father practised for hours Bach, Brahms, and Schumann at our bed-time, and we lay listening, learning them all by heart; and where I seemed to spend most of my life in bed and in disgrace. A cross French nurse dominated here from whom my sister used to try to protect me (she was my only and elder sister), and I can

remember nothing of happiness. There was always a feeling of something being wrong, though I can remember occasions when my father must have tried to put this right, and join me into the general life and happiness. He used to read Pickwick aloud to us in the evenings, but I was almost too young to understand it, being only five or six, and the fat boy was the only thing in it that I enjoyed.

Another occasion I remember was starting off alone with my father, to go to the pantomime, feeling very awed and excited, in a new plum-coloured frock. But I fell into a heap of liquid mud outside St. Mary Abbot's Church as we were getting a cab, so, in spite of the sympathy and kindness of the cab-driver, I was taken home in disgrace.

Then I could not or would not eat meat, and this special sin meant that at three o'clock in the afternoon, when our governess arrived, I would still be sitting before a plate of cold meat, [floating in tears,] from which she would somehow achieve my release. Yet there were wonderful moments—days of deep dense fog, so thickly yellow we see none like them now. No one came to the house on those days, and all sounds were muffled; but we heard faint shouts outside, and saw dim lights. I loved to look through the letter-box on these days into the thick gloom—so richly marvellous—though the rush of cold air smarted one's eyes.

Then there were the days spent at the house of my

grandmother* in Belgrave Square. We went to luncheon there very often, and my grandmother was always writing letters; she seemed to write endlessly at her large covered writing-table, and we were always told she had "a lovely hand." These days have a strange aroma in my memory—there was something different about the great big warm house, the good food, the bearded kind butler, and the tall footmen. They were all in a different order to our usual life. My grandmother was a Roman Catholic, and we labelled everything about her "Roman Catholic. Thus, to this day, I feel going downstairs one foot at a time has something to do with Roman Catholicism. We always thought so then, and called it "going downstairs Roman Catholic way."

We used to get rather bored sometimes with the long afternoons we spent here, playing tea-parties with two yellow china cats, who sat on either side of the back drawing-room fire. They had their heads turned sideways to look at you, and gleaming green glass eyes, and blue spots on their backs. How often I wish I knew where they were now! We used to collect various other cats and animals and birds, to share these tea-parties, all given in fragile Dresden egg-cups, or little Dresden cups and saucers, taken out of our grandmother's china cupboards. For she never minded what we did.

Once at Christmas time when I was five I was left

* This was Lady Herbert of Lea, wife of Sidney Herbert.

alone in our Kensington home (the rest of my family having gone to spend Christmas at my mother's home near Salisbury), and I can still remember the strange feeling of desolation that came over me when, climbing to the end of my bed on Christmas morning, I found my stocking quite empty and limp. There were no presents left for me that Christmas, and the house was very dreary, with only the old caretaker, and Mrs. Dot the cat.

But in the afternoon who should come but my grandmother, arriving like a fairy godmother, in her neat little brougham and pair of beautiful mouse-coloured horses, all so elegantly turned out. She brought me several presents and carried me off for the day to her house and her yellow china cats.

She is remembered for ever surely through acts like these, if for no more ! At almost the same age I used often to stay with her, and left much alone, I used to wander about as I pleased in her big house. It held one terror, her French maid, a woman of most forbidding appearance, with beetling brows, black flashing eyes, and a moustache. She looked like the very picture of a witch, and I always think of her when I read Le Fanu's " Uncle Silas," for she seems the prototype of the terrible French governess in that book. We called her " Cockroach " later on, for she was terrified by these flying creatures when staying with us in the country in the summer. She died many years later, still in the service of my grandmother,

mysteriously and quickly—telling nothing. I was staying in the house at the time.

But in these roamings through my grandmother's house I came across a wonderful treasure. I have said she was a Roman Catholic—a convert, and very devout. She had a small lamp always alight in front of a picture of Our Lady on top of the front stairs; and down a long passage, through a green baize swing door, I found yet another narrow passage, leading to the back stairs, and here I found a side door, opening into I did not know where. But one day I peeped in and saw my grandmother, more like a fairy godmother than ever, busily folding golden and silver brocaded clothes in rustling paper and putting them away into a big chest. She was absorbed and did not see me. But after that day I would creep in there quite often and sit there quietly. There was a little hanging lamp always brightly burning, and I got to know it was her chapel, where she practised her strange Roman Catholic rites. I liked sitting there, I liked the curious smell that seemed to inhabit there, and I wondered what it all meant.

Many years later Mary de Morgan (the sister of William de Morgan the writer and architect, and herself the writer of the most perfect fairy stories) told me, in reading the future in my hand, that I should one day become a Roman Catholic. This statement filled me then with unutterable misery and anger. Roman Catholic meant not only all sorts of bogies to me, but

also feebleness of intellect and slavery to priests, as I had been taught. No insult could therefore have been more terrible to me; and from henceforth, till it was forgotten, it was hurled at me by everyone: "You are going to be a Roman Catholic." "This is the Roman Catholic." "You tell lies, because you are a Roman Catholic." How I hated poor Miss Mary de Morgan for her unfortunate prophecy!

Our country house was quite close to the sea, on a bare and open coast, with a windmill (since, alas! destroyed). How we loved this windmill! It figured in all our thoughts as a kind of personal friend, a protective personality without which one could hardly live.

We knew all its humours and characteristics: the sails went down with a sort of strange lilt and rush, and the slats merrily clipped and clapped as they went round. It was filled with this sort of gay life, rollicking and singing in a fresh breeze; but in a gale it became terrifying—whirling round with such force and speed that one felt afraid to go near in case one was drawn into its determined livingness as into a whirlpool. On still days it stood utterly motionless—secret and strange; waiting, it seemed, for a mysterious summons to continue its busy life.

This country life was always full of delight, and our arrival after months in dim and dirty London was almost delirious with joy to me. The cold clean air, the clear light, made one's spirits rise beyond control,

and I would run round and round the garden like a dog. Those ebullitions of animal spirits were much disapproved of by my father, and I was always severely reproved for them. So I thought them somehow very wrong, yet I could not help them; and whenever I returned from the imprisonment of London, and saw again the sparkling living expanse of the sea, I could never control the joy that arose in me.

The only thing that I could not bear in the country was our periodical visit to the Workhouse. My mother always visited it, and insisted I should play my violin to the old men and women; and I used to dread the announcement: "We are going to the Workhouse on Friday, and Gwen must take her violin." Some of the old people hated my playing and shook their fists at me; and how I sympathised with them! Others loved it, and in time I got to love playing to these, but it was always a misery to go and see so much sadness, and one I could never forget.

In the spring and autumn I used to ride with my father—in the summer we sailed. My father kept many boats of differing sizes, from a canoe and rowing boats to a yawl of 12 or 14 tons. His fleet grew larger in time, in both senses; but there were always the smaller sailing and rowing boats as well. I used to accompany him everywhere (being the strong member of the family); and we used to walk in to Littlehampton nearly every day to talk to the sailors,

to buy lobsters and crabs, and to spend hours with the boat-builder. For my father became ambitious to make his fortune in trading at one time, and built a ketch of 120 tons. How well I remember my long waitings, sitting on piles of clean wood, while my father, pipe in hand, talked in a tiny shed with Mr. Harvey (the boat-builder), for ever, it seemed, discussing the plans of this new ship.

These rides and sails are amongst the more perfect memories of my life, and I did not love the sails the less through being often drenched to the skin by the waves breaking in, while one sat cold and shivering in the bottom of the boat. My father was an ideal companion—he hardly ever talked, except when he really had something to say—and we would sail for hours in silence ; or with just now and again a word : "There's a breeze coming," if it was very still, and we would be watching for a ripple of wind ; or else, perhaps, lots of bad language over missing some bit of wind, and not going about quick enough, or not making our point in tacking. Life seemed to go by so peacefully then, with no sort of hurry, on these long expeditions with him. These sailings were full of adventures too ; episodes and dangers—strange doings and seeings now shrined away in one's mind. Full of enjoyment, and of endurance—often hungry and cold, and swept with rain and big seas, yet one was always happy and singing to oneself, feeling part of all that large life and liberty.

I love most to remember my father after some long day's sail, when in the evening we at last neared the harbour, with the wind dropped to an utter calm. He would sit, his pipe in his hand, at the tiller, the western sun in his face, and everything in the boat silent, except for the occasional flap of the mainsail, the creak of the boom or the tiller, and the faint movement homewards, the lightest touch of wind. Speaking was out of the question, we were both bathed in the peace; but if I looked at him he would smile.

But the homecomings were not always peaceful. Often we nearly missed the tide, and once that deep river flowed outwards we would be kept waiting outside for hours. So with many bangs and thumps and swearings we would endeavour to tack up before it was too late. I loved to watch the swift river, so deep and green, that rushed out to sea—none of the bangs and shouts disturbed my happiness; not even pinching my fingers hurt me much.

Often he would go off alone in a very small sailing boat, and his homecoming would be so delayed that we would grow nervous, and walk down to the harbour at night to watch for his coming. We always thought his end would come, like Shelley's, at sea; and we would be full of fears, waiting for him. And then out of the dark night we would hear a faint sound on the water down below, and through the dim darkness we would see the familiar white sail stealing

up the harbour. What were my father's thoughts on these long days of lonely sailing? How wonderfully he lived his life alone, filled interiorly with his thoughts and his music, and with joy over the beauty of winds and moons and storms!

He taught us much about the stars, and I can never look into the wide jewelled heavens at night and see the great constellations without feeling his questioning spirit entering my mind. Now, perhaps, he knows.

One of our greatest excitements was his telescope, through which on clear nights we would be allowed to gaze, and learn about the moon and its cold solitary mountainous spaces. We would see Jupiter and his moons too, and occasionally Saturn (whose rings I could never see). He knew so much about so many things, particularly the stars and wild flowers; these last my sister always did with him, loved and understood, but their scientific life, even their very names, I never could remember.

Then there were the long rides, though these were sometimes anything but peaceful, for my father always rode rebellious horses that required great patience, and at this time his patience was soon exhausted, and we would have painful scenes over many things, particularly opening gates. But putting these on one side, I remember the absorbed happiness of early spring, the hot yellow dusty roads, the woods bare of leaves, but filled with primroses and clear

sunshine. We would take long days out together, sometimes, lunching at inns over the far Sussex downs; passing romantic hidden farms, where I used to picture myself living in future days, when I was grown up, always under the stars.

Sometimes these rides were very trying, for my father did not understand about health, and, well or ill, I had to go with him. There are certain Sussex ridges where I can feel vividly, even now, the misery I suffered over them, galloping after him with my head beating at every stride of my horse as though it would burst, myself in tears. But he never knew of it, riding along in front, absorbed in his thoughts or wrestling with some musical difficulty that on our return he would at once record—running in and playing or writing the solution he had found.

Some days he would instruct me in many things, even the Stock Exchange! I remember trying to understand about "bulls" and "bears" and the iniquity of "corners" in wheat. But I am afraid though he took so much trouble I remembered and understood very little of these.

There were whole days, too, spent on the river, when we came back very late, slipping home on the swiftest tide; and he would ask me to listen to the bat's high note, for the river seemed made for silence, and there was no sound but this and the little tap of the water, against the boat's sides.

My father was a great swimmer, he would swim

out what seemed to us to be many miles away, and his bald head gleamed, like a strange shiny ball, on the sea's far surface. He taught us to swim after many terrifying episodes in our childish days, and bathing off his yacht became one of our greatest pleasures in later years.

I do not know very much of the details of my father's early life, nor do I recollect my childhood very clearly; I remember him more as he became, than as he was. But he seems in my remembrance to stand as the inspiration and centre of everything we did; his plans and thoughts, his spirit was what moved our world, in his life our life lay. He often talked to one of his own childhood, relating to us the wild expeditions he used to go on with his elder brother, their rides, and sailing escapades on the Severn; active doings and occupations in which his happiness always lay in a life intimately connected with nature: then, as later, any adventure, any loveliness, called to him, and he followed, rejoicing in what he saw.

In this occupied way he always lived, and I see him, in my mind's eye, sitting at his writing-table in the country, working till the last minute, while my sister and I were running up on to the Mound (a small artificial hillock in the garden overlooking the sea), to see if the yacht had yet arrived, for we could see her tall mast standing up beside the mill. Or we waited with the horses outside the front-door for his coming—

I cannot think of anyone who moved more quickly than he did; no moment was ever wasted; in all these things he would come running out to us, we started and were gone.

With what a wonderful zest and happiness he thus filled our childhood! It seems, when one recollects that time, as though the whole of his holidays were spent in expeditions on the sea or up the river, or riding, as the case might be. In these days we shared our expeditions with the William Richmond family, who would be in lodgings in the village, and Mr. (afterwards Sir Robert) Morant. My father had a very small sailing boat at that time, and she used to be anchored outside most of the summer; but we did not share in the nights spent aboard her, we only went on long expeditions by day.

And in the springtime, alone with him, we had the plantings of the garden with the wonderful little packets of Sutton's seeds: how I admired (and envied) the little sticks he used to cut to mark them with—neat little sticks cut with a very sharp knife. No one can cut sticks as he did.

In summertime now, the sound of bees always recalls to me, almost too vividly, those lovely peaceful days; the flowers we had sown arrived at their full bloom, and the excitement of the fruit-picking—for we always picked all the fruit for the jam-making ourselves. Raspberry and strawberry picking were immensely hot and arduous; but how we loved going

round the garden with him, finding our way so carefully through the vegetable beds, to pinch the ripening peaches and apricots.

In the autumn our greatest event was picking apples and helping him carry the heavily laden baskets up a perpendicular ladder into the loft, where we lay each crisp and perfect apple separately on a shelf.

How we loved those days! How bereft we felt when they ended, and he returned to London to his work. The goodbye at the hall door was always followed by myself, with first, a rush to my bedroom window, which overlooked the road, to wave goodbye; and then (always accompanied by Scamp the dog), I would run to the Mound, where, holding up Scamp, we would watch till we could see him no more.

These departures were always like the crashing of a glass—they broke each time some part in oneself; and without him life became entirely lonely and without point.

How different this life was to our London one, when we saw him only occasionally, for he was always too busy, rushing off here and there; or when he was at home, writing music, perched on his high stool in his cubby-hole. In the evenings, though, if he was in, we would read aloud to him; and I think we never went out, at any moment, without saying goodbye; he could not bear to be left in any other way. Sometimes I would fetch him and drive with him to the bank in Pall Mall, sitting waiting for him in the

hansom-cab outside. These drives had always a vague thrill; there was such an excitement as to whether the hansom would be a good one, with rubber tyres, and a fresh horse, for hansom-cabs were very wonderful things to us in those days. But his life in London was almost too full of work for us, though on Sundays we would go long walks through the park with him, or visit Mr. Dannreuther, and listen to their piano-playing and talk.

Other times we would spend Sunday afternoons at Mr. Burne-Jones's,* who in my remembrance was painting the Briar Rose series; here we would dance on the lawn, for some reason, and have tea out of doors: and I retain a marvellous vision of his daughter's loveliness.

In my earliest childhood I was very afraid of my father, and I have not many clear recollections of him. Indeed, I fear I had little love for either of my parents then. Somehow in my earliest days I was considered so naughty that I did not enter much into the general life downstairs. When I was only three years old my father consulted two single ladies as to what should be done with one so wicked as I was. I believe they replied that they wondered if I was properly understood.

However that may be, I seemed to be always crying, always in disgrace, though I cannot remember what I did to cause all this misery.

* Afterwards Sir Edward Burne-Jones.

The only downstair times I enjoyed were Sunday evenings in the country, when my father was at home—for he had instituted wonderful games with tops, when we all (with the servants) sat round the dining-room table, for their display. The one I liked best was a marvellous humming-top, which my father spun with such dexterity that it made miraculous music; and we used to have a system of betting on a little top which held six flat and different coloured discs, which all shot out as the mother-top span, and we would bet pennies on which would spin the longest; but this game did not interest me much, though I was very pleased and proud to be sitting there with the rest.

Then we would finish up the evening sitting on either side of him on the piano-stool while he played and sang, in his funny husky tenor voice, the "Baby's Opera" and "Baby's Bouquet," and other more grown-up music as well. I remember his telling me in later years how delighted and amused he was when, after he had been playing "Lohengrin" to us, I, then five or six years old, turned to him and said very earnestly: "Isn't that rather vulgar?"

At this time the village policeman was a perpetual bogey to me, as to many children. I was constantly threatened with him, and I thought he lived in a little two-roomed house that I could see from the night-nursery window, and would constantly look at in alarm. I did not go downstairs much, I preferred

being upstairs. I would hide behind the big curtains in the day-nursery, listening to the wind, or watch the rain pouring against the blurred window-panes, making little pools where it got through the plaster. Sometimes I would be invited downstairs with my sister when my father was not there—but I always returned in disgrace. I irritated my mother and I am afraid disliked her; and something always went wrong.

I was very fond of my sister, even though she was always the favourite, always downstairs with my mother and father, and *always* good. She used to drive to Kensington Gardens in a hansom-cab with my mother in the hot summer, while I walked along Kensington High Street from Phillimore Place (where we lived) with my nurse. I used sometimes to feel this a grievance, and I remember once, in a moment of desperate venom towards her when she was downstairs, pricking one of her Christmas-cards entirely full of holes with a pin.

I seem to remember continually going to bed early as a punishment in the hot summer in London, and lying listening to the hum of a hurdy-gurdy outside—how I hated it and its vulgar music!—and I was always being shut up in the boxroom. To this day I so dislike the smell of boxes that I cannot bear one to be left in the room. Perhaps this is the reason. Yet I do not remember why I was thus punished at all, except once when I was very small, and my mother asked me what a verb was, and I said "J'ai, tu as, il a"

over and over again, getting into a panic like an animal and weeping profusely. I could not make out what she meant, and I was too frightened to stop and think, but only kept repeating "J'ai, tu as, il a," till my mother, driven, I expect, nearly mad, had me dragged upstairs and imprisoned in that inevitable boxroom, where I sobbed on the floor for hours, yet could not make out what she had meant nor what I had done. I used on these occasions to be filled with remorse for my wickedness, and I would make endless resolutions to be better, and prayers to God.

Perhaps the turning-point in my early spiritual life came when I was about ten. I remember being terribly rude and irritable continually to my mother, and "answering back," and really suffering agonies of remorse over this inevitable happening, and having a horror of myself. Nothing seemed to get me any better, and one day I said ruder things than usual (I suppose) and was shut in the boxroom instead of going to the Pantomime. I do not remember minding the loss of the amusement, for I am almost without the faculty for enjoying theatres, and I felt the punishment perfectly just. My despair was at my continued inability to control my horrid fault. Remaining there many hours, lying on the floor, I determined, as often before, that I must change, and I reviewed my whole life. I wrote a prayer in pencil on a little scrap of paper in a very large and smudgy handwriting that I can see now; and from that day

I began a real effort to reform. It took a long time to keep out of trouble, to cure my habit of "answering back" that I hated so much; and I was still so often accused of things that I had not done, and I could never escape from being under a cloud that I did not comprehend. I remember my father cutting a stick to beat me with one day when I had quarrelled with my sister, and she ran to tell him about it, yet my remembrance is still that I was not at fault.

He did not beat me, but looked so grave and spoke so concernedly about my wickedness that, though I did not know what he meant, I was terrified. No one ever believed anything I said, so I must at one time have been a great liar, I suppose. But now I began to lead a life quite apart, with a companion I invented, and in whose company I was quite content. I could not bear being with people, I wanted always to be alone. I used to walk miles, all over the country —by the seashore, or wherever it was loneliest—in company with my imagined friend, and an Oliver biscuit in my pocket; happier than I can possibly express. How much this solitary life taught me, and how wonderful it is to look back on in after-life! It was full of imagined journeys, romantic argosies into marvellous unknown worlds.

But London remained ever an unsurmountable misery in my life. I could not get over its dreariness, I could not anyhow embellish its streets. The very drive from the station would awake in my heart a

sense of utter desolation, and we would pass so many beggars on the way home that I used to dread to look out of the cab window; and I could not bear to see the men who ran breathlessly by our four-wheeler in order to carry up the luggage when we arrived. How I used to pray and hope that we would not be followed by any of these! I would peep surreptitiously out of the window, hoping they had not seen us, and almost afraid to look, but they were always there —breathless, ragged, starved-looking men; they filled me with a terror and misery I could not possibly have explained.

The whole journey to London was miserable to me, from the time we went through our gates at the end of the garden, when in spite of every resolution, my heart seemed finally to burst, and I would drive away in "old Mr. Shepherd" (the name we always called the "fly")—in floods of tears. And London when we reached it seemed to be always closed in, in a kind of dim, dreary darkness almost unbearable. Do children feel such an agony of misery now?

I never wanted people, nor cared for anyone, except my father, my mother's brother Lord Pembroke, and the dog. These made my human life; my music filled the rest. I read a great deal under my father's tuition, for my sister was so often ill that our governess was almost dropped.

At ten, I had a passion for Mazzini, Walt Whitman, Keats and Shelley, and "Wuthering Heights."

A very little later, I read of Father Damien and the lepers, and I think that book was one that made almost the deepest impression of any on my life. But everything was given up to music, to practising the violin.* I would never give that up, except for short delirious holidays, when I did nothing but abandon myself to a wild joy—sailed, rode, walked, was out of doors all day, my idea of heaven itself.

I kept at this time as far away from people as I possibly could. I was so terrified of them that I usually hid when they came, and as I grew older I kept a "hate" book, where I made lists of the people I hated most, carefully classifying them in their varying degrees. My father used to call me "the savage," and I remember Sir George Grove telling my father he was almost too afraid to come to our house because his youngest daughter was so alarming. "She sits in a corner and glares at me," he said.

So life was a sort of see-saw, between London and country, and the London life was like an imprisonment, nothing changed its ugliness, and our time there was simply an endurance to me, a waiting to escape. Yet I found London was best for working in; first, there were no temptations to do anything else, and the sense of others working all round one made it easier to be faithful to dull exercises and scales. These days of a discipline, inspired, I believe, by my

* I had started learning the violin at eight years old, the piano being quite beyond my capacity, so given up.

father, yet self-imposed, were (I have since discovered) of inestimable value to me in later life. And as sacrifice counts, even these small sacrifices counted, giving a kind of reality, a reason to the life we led.

The escapes to the country always made work hard, for who could wish to stay indoors, when everything one loved most was outside? and it seemed almost terrible to miss a moment of those passing days. I can remember well the struggle to bear this renunciation. How stay indoors when outside the lark sang, the shining sands called to one, and farther afield were the woods whose paths were thickly covered in pale bunchy primroses, where lying on one's back, looking into the dappled sky, one was almost obliterated oneself, drowned in the songs of the birds?

What a life for a child! I would go many miles alone, tearing my hands and clothes, to find birds' eggs, or in the impossible hope of discovering a nightingale's nest, or nests of any rare kind. How could one ever express what those long shining spring days meant to one!—the smell of cowslips on the soft downs, the golden and green of the buttercup fields; and I remember the arguments with my sister, who liked daisies the best. We would go long drives too, and picnics, when all the servants came; and everyone but myself picked bunches and bunches of primroses. Then there were friends who entered with us into this life, and loved it as we did; Kitty

Lushington* was one of the most precious of these. We would walk with her in the spring evenings, holding one on each side of her arm, over the sands, the tide far out—she telling us all the time the most wonderful fairy stories, while the sound of the tiny waves would break in, and merge, with the mysterious breathless whisper of her voice. And another friend† would take us long walks of almost ecstatic excitement. For each evening he promised, this time *really*, to take us to fairyland ; it was all arranged, only we must keep our eyes shut till he told us to open them. And so we would go, holding his arm, and climbing over ditches and hedges and breakwaters, always convinced we were arriving *this* time, till he told us sadly that, after all, the Fairy Queen had just told him that we could not go tonight, and we would open our eyes to find ourselves in the flat fields, where the cut corn, in hundreds of stacks, stood in dim rows beneath the low harvest moon. And at night we would rush out into the moonlight down to the sea, where, running along the sands, one would try to touch the silver path that lay upon its face. What days were these !

Then the time would draw near for our return to London ; but sometimes we stayed later, right on into November, though we never understood why this miraculous happening took place. Then we would

* Afterwards Mrs. Leo. Maxse.
† Mr. (after Sir) Philip Burne-Jones.

see the great bonfire on the Fifth of November, watch the fireworks, and see the torchlight procession, though the latter we hardly cared for at all. It was the fireworks and the bonfire that all day long we looked forward to, anxiously watching the clouds. It was a long walk, quite two miles, to Littlehampton, and on our return we were given a minute cup of cocoa and a tiny slice of bread and butter each. It does not sound much, but to us it was a feast, and of a deliciousness never surpassed.

As we grew older our lives became very different. My sister "came out" at seventeen, and was immensely gay and pretty; and I looked on at her, all admiration, but not wishing myself to do what she did. My greatest wish was never to be grown up; I wanted to remain always as I was, aged fifteen, and my father's companion; he and my music completely filled my life. He often spoke to me at this time of my disagreeableness as a child, telling me in a delightful kindness how such disagreeableness provided a greater material and possibility for niceness, "and you have got such a darling little girl now," he would always end.

How tender was my father's love! I have not forgotten even now the joy the following letter gave me on my tenth birthday. For it assured me in some way that I was of some value to him, that I meant something to him; and that, perhaps, was his intention in writing it—to give me, in my rather difficult life at

home, a sense that I *was* something that people cared for, and wanted; that I had a place.

17, Kensington Square,
February 6, '88.

"Darling little Gwindegwandle,

"I hope you are having a real nice birthday by the time you get this. I'm sure they will all be as loving and kind to you as ever you could wish. It's a great pity we can't be with you too, but it will be almost as good as having two birthdays this year, as we shall keep it again more or less when you come back to us.

"But we will drink your health tomorrow, and think a lot of you; and wish you many happy 'turns and all that.

"Mother and I got back all right last night, and very comfortably too; for we had such a nice steady carriage, and didn't get shaken about as we always do on that horrid line down to Littlehampton.

"Flora gave us a very good dinner, and there was Mary come back, and Annie looking nice and cheerful, and the house tidy and clean.

"It won't be many days before you're back with us now. And I hope it will be nice weather like this.

"Now goodbye, my dearest little girl.

"With lots of love and happy returns of the day.

"Your loving old
"Feygey."

How curious it is that "that horrid line to Littlehampton" should still remain of exactly that same "horrid" character!

III

MY FATHER IN LONDON

All this time we never attended any church services, though we never went through any village without entering the church. My father took us to see many little old churches in Sussex, and taught us the rudiments of architecture; he had a great knowledge of architecture, and in the end he taught us much. All his life he could never pass a church without going into it, and getting absorbed in the beauties it possessed.

But not in London. There we never entered a church—never heard them mentioned even. Sunday meant a day of agonising dullness, of horrible food, and clean stiff clothes that hurt, and dreary streets. How I hated Sunday! I began dreading its arrival on Friday, and some of the horror it filled me with is with me still. People seemed to become utterly different on Sunday; they were so extra dull, so commonplace: and in the country, what I called "Sunday boys" infested the lanes and terrified me, horrified me with their ugliness.

We never learnt any Church religion, nor associated God with Church. But I always said my secret prayers. I learnt by heart my favourite hymns

prayed desperately when my sister was ill—yet I never associated any of this with Church.

I made continual resolutions to be good: it was almost a mania. I made lists of my sins, hoping in time to cross some of them out; and I had an idea that God was somehow like the sea—as large, and as unchangeably there. For the sea was the thing I loved most in this world. I imagined that one would one day become one with it, walk deeply into it, and become of it: and I thought that God was somehow like that. I was very interested in God, and always asking about Him; but no one ever told me anything that was real or interesting—they seemed to be bored about God. Sometimes I would summon up all my courage and ask my father about God, and he was silent; he seemed reluctant to speak of Him, and I would feel a peculiar frustrated sensation, a kind of depressed irritation against him as against other people, who would not tell me about God.

I had a violent temper, [like my father had in his youth], and there were terrible rows between us that I still tremble to think of. For he would think it right to beat the dog, and I would hang on to his arm in the wildest rage; and I would sit up all night to let in this dog so that my father should not hear him bark outside. These angers always came uncontrollably at the sight of any unkindness to animals or children. I saw red, as people express it so very truly, and I had desperate fights with people in the roads.

Otherwise I was just timid, and never knew what to say about anything; and this perhaps was accentuated by my idea of Christ. For I read the New Testament assiduously, and I thought Christ something peculiar, I do not know what. But the thing I loved most and fastened on in his acts, was his never answering when he was accused. This, it seemed to me, must be what I should do, and I fastened on it as the thing most to follow. How often in later years this plan of not answering has helped me in my life! And when much older I thought of Christ as a divine memory, I felt I could do what otherwise was impossible, because of what he did, for the sake of his utter meekness. Have not others often found this ideal of Christ's an inspiration, a wonderful reality that one could try to copy? To be gentle for his sake, when otherwise bitterness or anger might prevail.

I seem to have been more violent and more primitively angry than most people are all my life; I was often reminded of this, so many years later, when listening to Baron von Hügel. He used to insist so much on his own violence of nature, and tell me how without religion he would have been impossible, and these words are so true: "No one could have lived with me. I required religion to water me down, to make me possible."

How awful, too, are some scenes of one's childhood! How awful were the times when one asked for forgiveness and was refused! How necessary it is for

us to remember these ! They help us not to be judging or hard ; they remind us how we are all of us full of so many faults, such terrible imperfections ; we have so much to learn of understanding and patience.

In later years I started going to church, to Evensong ; and I used to play my violin there in our country church for a voluntary, and to accompany the hymns. I was also confirmed at my own wish at twenty-one, and went always to Holy Communion after that, in memory of the great life of Christ. I was prepared for Confirmation by an old married clergyman, who was vicar at our country home. He was so detached that he might truly have been a monk. I know no one now at all like him. He had a large family to whom he was devoted, and he had a great sense of humour, entering into all their lives ; yet he lived an interior life with the poor and suffering, entirely apart. He had a spiritual difference from the ordinary man, most evident to the eyes of a child. I remember his teaching consisted, mainly, in showing me the prophecies and precursors of Christ, all through the Old Testament and Psalms. We had to look all these up, and read the riddles hidden in the words. We had nothing of St. Paul, nor what, perhaps, would be taught now. But I always remember his answer, when at the end of his teaching I said I did not know if I properly " believed " : " Lord, I believe, help Thou my unbelief."

These were the happiest days of my life, riding

alone (for I had been given a beautiful horse), reading, practising, and much with my father, whose power of enjoyment, love of expeditions, and eternally young spirit, made him the most inspiring companion I have ever known. Everything one did with him became interesting, delightful; and from whatever depression of spirits he might be suffering (for he was often deeply depressed), he never missed any beauty; he was always moved by the things that moved me most. He gave me, at this time, a ticket for the "Pops" at St. James's Hall, where I would go with him on Monday evenings, and alone on Saturday afternoons, to hear "Old Joe."* How well I remember that wonderful quartette playing, with Joachim so still, so perfectly absorbed in the music, and one with his violin! No showy swaying about, no over-emotional movements, no restlessness. So many players irritate us by indulging their own individuality, by their own emotional feelings so imperfectly controlled, that they fret the listener. If they could but learn the power of stillness!

My parents used to give occasional dinner-parties—never, I think, of more than eight people. But these were of the most tremendous importance to us, and the whole house was upset for the day. There was always an hour or more set aside by my father beforehand to go to the Russian shop in Bayswater, where we bought strange dishes—lava and caviare, roasted

* Joseph Joachim.

condiments, sweets and candied fruits. My father loved the gentle-voiced Russian who kept this shop, and was terribly distressed when, some years later, this Russian killed himself.

"He got into the hands of some Jew," my father would say; but I do not know on what grounds.

But to go back to our dinner-parties. They consisted usually of a group of the same people; we did not have much change—the Burne-Joneses, Mrs. Richard Greene, the Willie Richmonds, Mary Gladstone, Margot Tennant (as she then was), Arthur Balfour, Spencer Lyttelton and others of his family, and some learned women (Beatrice Potter and others) whom my sister and I much disliked. We children usually went down at the end of dinner, and stayed up afterwards when there was music. Spencer Lyttelton used to sing; but his singing was not his great point, but rather his twinkling kindness, his hidden warmth. For he was almost like a glowworm; he managed to hide himself so completely under an abrupt exterior, and often terrified me by the shortness of his remarks. Yet how one's heart glowed and was melted by the intense kindness and warmth of his smile! My father (and I think everyone who knew him) adored him, and he was always our most treasured, our most longed-for guest. We talked grandly (as children) of the lackadaisical Arthur Balfour, his charm, and his train of

ladies; and we were much entertained by Margot Tennant, both in her person and talk (for she was always a great talker) and in her dancing. She would sometimes arrive in a pleated skirt that I thought enormously grand, and dance for us, as taught by Letty Lind, who was then the fashion. And there were many others who now entered our lives. I remember Mr. Harry Plunket Greene (now my husband), who first came to our house when I was eleven, delighting my father by the inspiration of his singing and his moving voice.

But the days I remember most clearly in London are the Queen's two Jubilees, when we got up at five o'clock to sit on high wooden stands near Buckingham Palace, for many hot hours, to see the procession pass. The illuminations were the most marvellous part; and nothing can express what these meant to us—the loveliness of the Square garden lit with innumerable chains of little coloured lamps, and the trees hung with big Japanese lanterns. The lights were so tenderly lovely, so fairy-like—surely lovelier than the marvellous illuminations we achieve now! I had a special passion for the blocks of coloured glass, with the initials of the Queen on them in colours, that were fastened on to houses, and lit up within. These seemed to me utterly inexplicable, magical, and I loved them the best.

What strange things seemed wonderful to us then! Twice a year we drove with Philip Burne-Jones to

the Star and Garter at Richmond. This drive was an event in our lives. We talked of it for weeks beforehand. The coachman had to wear top-boots (we always asked for them specially), and we had to have a carriage *and pair*. I never enjoyed it so very much myself, but I would rather have died than said so, for it was one of our greatest events, and we drove along pompously, bowing to the people we met. I was more anxious than anything to appear like other people at this time; and I was so tall that my sister's cast-off frocks that I always wore had to be lengthened, either with large bits let in at the waist, or with large hems let down at the bottom, so I was certainly a strange sight. I did not mind this, but as I grew older I longed to look elegant as she did. I longed to be able to talk, and to appear at my ease—but this was far from my accomplishment.

The strict discipline, gradually learnt from my father at this time, was of immense service in my later life. I would never, for any amusement, give up my practising; and even on the Queen's Jubilee Day, with all those hours spent sitting on a hot stand, I managed to do my usual four hours of practising. I had certainly less temptation than many people to give up this work, for I cared for nothing else—rather I disliked heartily, balls, theatres, parties; I would never go to any of these, and have only been to three dances in my whole life. And we were called on to practise many endurances in those days too—often

hunger, and in winter constant cold. It never occurred to us to ask for anything beyond bread and butter for breakfast; there was only one egg, and that was my father's. We lived mostly on the ginger biscuits which inhabited the sideboard drawer. Our wardrobes, too, were more than scanty, our boots never fitted us, nor did we ever possess many handkerchiefs to deal with our bad colds; I used to borrow these from servants and friends.

As we grew older my sister made many friends, and I hated them all. I was not jealous of them, but I found them stupid and silly; I still lived for nothing but my father and my music; I thought nearly all people were stupid; I crammed more and more of them into my hate book, and was certain that the beauty of nature ought to be the sole interest and joy of everyone.

The noise of the wind rollicking round the house, and blowing in great gusts at night; or whistling strangely in the chimney, or wailing outside the drawing-room door; the sound of the sea, harsh and rough after a gale, or rolling in in great solid breakers that boomed and cracked as they fell—these are the things I remember, these are the things I loved; these, and my father's practising (for he still practised for hours at night), and we still fell asleep to the distant sound of a prelude and fugue of Bach.

How critical and still more critical I became! How little I cared for, or needed, people in my life: I never

thought of them or their lives at all. I lived in a world of my own, rushing from my mother's tea-parties, glaring at my father's friends, desiring nothing but my music, the country, and despising those who cared for different things.

This loneliness of spirit is, perhaps, inevitable for some people, and necessary too; one learns a certain reliance through it, a capacity to live by oneself, and one learns too to love things for themselves.

Life soon changes and calls for all the discipline, all the hope, all the stored beauties that one has seen. The tender love, the pain and sorrow about one that one did not understand, the beauties that stayed and did not change—all these come shining out of the darkness that has covered them, and obscured them, yet kept them bright. They live in secret within us somewhere, shining brighter through the intervening years.

So the time passed by, hiding as it went the inevitable changes, the things one dreaded; and one gathered, too, these beautiful things to add to one's store. We spent much time in my mother's home* near Salisbury, with unique relations, in a spacious leisurely life that seems for ever gone.

Here we met all kinds and conditions of men; and I remember we grew to love Arthur Balfour, though the fact that he never came down till very late in the morning shocked us very much. And we studied people like the beautiful Mary Leiter (afterwards

* Wilton House, Salisbury.

Lady Curzon), the Tennants, and the Percy Wyndhams, whom we loved; Mr. and Mrs. Oscar Wilde, Milner, and many more. We could not bear Oscar Wilde: first his terrible appearance was too much for us, he was so ugly, so enormously fat and white; and then he was such a poseur, so annoyed if we did not all sit round worshipping, confounded by his cleverness, entertained by his silliest remarks; as children we found him positively odious. We felt terribly sorry, too, for his poor little wife, who seemed entirely ignored and snubbed. Children are very observant and very drastic about these sort of things; they have a great dislike of any injustice or unkindness that they think they see.

I remember, too, very vividly in later years, the occasion when my father received his D.C.L. at Oxford, with Kitchener and Rhodes. Kitchener looked magnificent, solidly heavy, a kind of cast-iron soldier; but Rhodes was a painful sight. He was so obsessed with fear that he actually looked furtive, keeping his head bowed down, looking sideways, and continually fidgeting with his hands. He was, for some reason that I forget, very unpopular at the time, and there was an idea that there would be some kind of hostile demonstration against him, and I remember my father saying he had never seen a man so afraid in his life. But these people and things belong to the world, they do not fit in here, and my memories of them are but the thoughts of a child.

Then there were springtimes with beloved relations in Ireland, where one rode and walked in woods of enchantment, the ground covered thickly in bluebells. These days held such beauty that they seemed, and seem still, to hang in some magical reality between heaven and earth.

IV

MY FATHER'S THOUGHTS ON CHURCH RELIGION

When we were just grown up my father inherited his home in Gloucestershire, and we now spent Christmas and Easter there instead of Sussex, and many long summer and autumn days. My father loved this home specially, with a love that was very characteristic of himself; that cherishing of tradition and memory that was deeply part of his very blood, and seemed to be the nucleus out of which he grew. Nearly all the memories he spoke of were of his childhood there; he held close in himself the past years. He never forgot the scene of any happiness, and stored away in himself those memories that no hand of time could efface. He loved his home and his family, and all the country round was familiar to him; and he became almost at once the real landlord, deeply interested in his estate, full of plans for its improvement, and hopes to realise. Our visits there were filled with talks of these, and of all the business they entailed.

He had now a motor, which he drove himself, and very soon developed the modern passion for speed. I often wonder how much he would have followed and

enjoyed the speeds at which motor-cars are driven now. For as he once said to me, "I was born crying because I could not go fast enough," and he had always to go faster than anyone else. So we had many hazardous drives at first, in strange motors that ran backwards up hills—things that motors do not now do—and my father always attempted things that were impossible then in hill-climbing—trying to climb hills like Birdlip and Bury, and nearly getting killed. We went long expeditions from now on, exploring different counties, and seeing abbeys, cathedrals, and churches; and he always drove himself.

These expeditions had wider horizons than the rides in Sussex; yet there was a difference in these days in Gloucestershire, rather as the difference between childhood and youth. There were no more sailings, no more free days at sea, no more rides for us together; and the duties and responsibilities of a landlord made these times heavier, more conventional and grown up. The very light of Gloucestershire is different; the country itself is richer and deeper, but there is a certain deadness, a kind of darkness, in all Midland skies. Or is it that Sussex has an unique radiance, a kind of dappled transparent light that makes all other counties seem dark in contrast?—and Sussex villages and downs shine ethereally bright. Of these times in Gloucestershire I remember most the blossom-covered orchards in springtime, the wide Severn, and the blue Cotswold hills.

From this time, too, my father went regularly to church every Sunday morning, whatever else he might want to do. With his great sense of responsibility he believed he owed it to his tenants and to his family; for his father had been a great Churchman, and had built the church at Highnam. My father loved "Highnam Spire," and was intensely proud of its beauty and height.

It is entertaining to listen to the views of ordinary persons on what they call the "artistic temperament," for anyone who is imaginative is often spoken of as though they were some strange beast. The artist's temperament—whatever it may be—is a very real thing, and a dividing chasm separates the artist's perceptions from the man in the street; there is a very real confraternity of the imaginative, however separated they may be in other ways. But to no one does this difference come as more of a shock than to the artist himself.

The world he lives in and enters at will, seems to him perfectly obvious and inevitable, one we all dwell in; so natural, that he has not conceived it possible that others do not enter it at all. Yet he has to make, some time or other, this discovery of his solitariness, and of his queerness in the eyes of the unimaginative man. He has to learn that the world knows little of the spirit that moves him; or if it recognises it, yet it holds this spirit as something wholly peculiar and strange. The world mostly stig-

matises what it does not understand ; but perhaps the loneliest feeling of all is not this kind of contempt of the world, but rather its tolerance of him and his difference ; for his sense of being different teaches him how alone he is most of all. And he has to accept being admired by people who have no understanding, being understood by people who have no real knowledge in themselves. He has to listen patiently to people who speak from a kind of science that they have learnt, and that they express glibly—too glibly for it to come from out of their own souls.

And the ordinary man has decided that the artist must be irresponsible, unpunctual, untidy—incapable of any practical thought or action, a nuisance to his family and all his friends. But the unimaginative live in stranger worlds than the imaginative : they live in worlds so unreal that they never get even a glimpse of the truth. How well I remember a well-known Headmaster of a great Public School explaining to me, that artists were always unpunctual, untidy, even dirty —selfish and oblivious of others ; so that one must pray one's sons would escape such a heritage. How nearly I laughed in his face ! For never have I met any Philistine more dependable and punctual than my father ; never have I seen anyone so trim and tidy, so like a little ship.

I suppose the long-haired untidy genius *has* existed, but there have been dirty and undependable people in all walks of life. Yet it seems exceptionally funny

to hear these words spoken of artists particularly, when all one has known of them has been the sheer opposite. My father's punctuality gained for us the name of "Parry Punctuality" with our unpunctual unimaginative friends; and his sense of order and discipline, his love of tradition, was so great that in these respects he would certainly put the ordinary man to shame.

Just as it might be difficult to live beside a saint, so it was sometimes difficult to live with him. For he carried his obliviousness of self to a heroic length, and never all his life have I heard him protest that he was too tired, or too ill, to carry out his engagements; and no inclemency of weather, added to his worst colds, would absolve him from any duty, or of going wherever he had arranged.

This made it difficult for him to tolerate any undependableness in others. He was Spartan, and what he did himself he required of *us*. Bad health annoyed him, in himself or anyone else, and he made no allowances for it, often suffering greatly himself as a result. He was perhaps too rigorous in this respect, just as he had little patience with any irresponsibility or want of self-control. Yet he made supreme allowances and exceptions, releasing all his tenderness and patience, to cover and strengthen the weaknesses of those he loved.

So his practical, dependable nature, that was so formed and disciplined in tradition, made it an

obligation to carry out whatever he thought right; and his church-going was witness to this sense in him. For he never cared himself for any part of it; he sat in the choir with a rebellious mind, and it never helped him in any way to modify his opinion of Church. Rather it accentuated his alienation, for the county Church Service irritated him profoundly by its dullness, hiding from him the very possibility of any life in Church religion itself.

I often think his Church eyes were put out, not only by the agnostic storm that engulfed his youth (the fierce rise of Science in opposition to Religion), but that the English Church herself was responsible for much, for she was at that moment at her very worst. She had reached the very apex of her conventional life, and in a *general* sense her preoccupation was almost solely with the letter—she had no place for the spirit that informs. She had not commenced that awakening that we have seen since, and one would have to look patiently then to find the Church we now expect.

So that the dreary services, the dull acceptance of a rigid dogma, or the emotional clouding of excess—all this turned away clear souls like my father's, who loved the purity and order, the impersonal spirit and moderateness, of Science. And in his day the very words and images, the similes with which the imaginative religious used to try and express the unexpressible, revolted him. He took *literally* the words meant to

imply the shiningness of heaven, the joy of God. Thus how often have I heard him and his friends pouring contempt on the mentality of those who spoke of heaven as a *place*, and a place where the streets were made of precious stones, and paved with gold—where angels played for ever on their harps. These things filled him with rage, and he would constantly read out, and quote to us, hymns of this type. He took all these things literally, and he would fulminate too with wrath over literal Bible Christians, who seemed at that date to enshrine a furious Deity, who exercised an unjust power, and enjoyed the sufferings of the souls He arbitrarily cast into hell.

We may smile at these curious misunderstandings, these strange erections in which the scientific minds of those days enclosed themselves. Yet they make one very sad, for this blindness was a limitation; it is impossible not to feel what might have been the width and expansion of those spirits had they been able to accept with more toleration the findings and inspirations of different minds.

For the Christian of that day was not truly occupied in casting souls into hell—he did not believe in doctrines so strange. Yet my father must have been permanently injured, as many others, by the travesties of religion that he had seen. His spirit had revolted from such unrealness, it had been outraged by terrible presentments of God. To him Church meant unworthy beliefs, ridiculous and unnecessary imposi-

tions, Sunday church-going, with which people solaced their minds. He therefore believed, he was convinced, that all dependence on Church was limiting, and one was but showing weakness in desiring a personal God.

Somewhere he had learnt, unfortunately, that men seek religion in order to be comfortable, that it was an anodyne, a mystical clouding of the spirit to the realities of this world. Humbug was his *bête noire*; and he hated the idea of any escape from reality into a false peace, or ease. He wanted no complacent settling of difficulties, and he never saw that the final call of religion was to nothing comfortable, but rather a call to a closer contact with all reality, the very thing he practised—a call to suffering and isolation, a boundless call.

How great a responsibility have so-called religious people in all of this! For it is due to their unrealness, their sanctimonious superiority, their sham holiness, that spirits such as his have fled away. No touch of the divine magnificence, nor of the beautiful mysteriousness and mercy of God, dwelt in the Church religion that he saw. An unreal Churchiness has destroyed the sight of many ardent spirits, and I remember that to him the very words holy and sanctity were horrible. They stood to him for all that was rigid, narrow, and sentimental—the whispered talk and Sunday church-going that brought no breath of beauty to the soul.

Alas! that he believed all this the sum-total of

Church religion! Alas! that he felt the Church *must* veil God from our eyes! Thus, to the very end, Church remained outside his affections and his mind; she was a this-world institution, an arrangement of the State, a kind of aid, no doubt, to keep people content and good, a sort of dope that was useful in hiding truth.

And the people who loved and needed Church were necessarily, in his mind, limited and far from a true religious sense.

For a true religion needed freedom from all institutionalism, as freedom from all binding down in dogma; religion was a spirit that could not be chained. The very idea of a personal God was horrible to him, almost inexplicable; it seemed to him that man should not desire to clothe in a body what was so mysteriously and utterly free.

He desired and believed the religious spirit dwelt in everything—in music, art, letters; he could not bear to enchain God in Person, as a kind of mammoth man. Man's need and dependence was to him his weakest element, and one not to be indulged and solaced by a sense of a Personal God. He never made any real attempt to understand, or see, what institutional religion might contain. His winged spirit could not stay to regard any dogma, nor wait to see that spirit might live and touch our spirit in a definite practice, in an organized definite faith. He feared too much the limitations of religion that he had seen.

V

MY FATHER'S THOUGHTS ON CHURCH RELIGION—(*Continued*)

And of the Roman Catholic Church he had the horror of his great hero, Cromwell—a fierce hatred that expressed itself in passionate words.

To him she seemed almost sinister, a hierarchy of immense worldly power; and the devoted lives of her priests were but cloaked efforts of mysterious designs, to gain more and more power over men's souls. Priests were sly, greedy, material-minded, self-indulgent, curious, and I do not know how many more disagreeable things; and I was brought up believing these things implicitly; the only bitterness my father's nature contained seemed to well up at the very mention of the Roman Catholic Church. He saw nothing of her intensely human, poor, pitiful side: and the devotion he was forced to recognise was but obligatory, or due to fear; or else it was a passion for ritual, incense, images, and "mumbo jumbo"—the baser things and superstitions that fascinate low minds.

It sometimes seems almost incredible that a man of so much knowledge, so wide a sympathy, should have remained, to the end, sincerely unaware of this great Church's real life; for he never moved away

from this huge prejudice, never escaped out of this vast unreality. Here he lived, a prey himself to some curious medieval fear; he never became aware of what we all know and recognise as peculiarly hers—her great supernatural life. The word supernatural itself meant to him, as to many people even now, some sort of debasing superstition of witches, bogies, and ghosts—things magical and unreal—and he never seems to have troubled to put his mind into any relation with her hidden life, never gained any knowledge of her spirit through the books we all depend and feed on, never saw anything of her immense spiritual life through the lives of her saints. Thus he seems to have ignored facts, like the great life of St. Teresa, and the beauty of St. John of the Cross: and the genius that has flowed in so many channels, issued in so many ways, the fierce light of God dwelling in chosen souls, he refused to recognise. He knew nothing whatever of the specific spirit of the Roman Catholic Church.

The Spanish Inquisition is where he placed her; there for him she stood. The spirit of Cromwell seems really to have entered his own life here; for no depth of prejudice, no cloud of exaggerated passion was too great for him to assimilate in respect of the Catholic Church. Immoral Popes, debasing superstitions, ignorant, cold, worldly priests—there for him was the Catholic Church, there she remained fully and completely expressed.

How sad it is that where separateness and difficulties may be inevitable, they should be accentuated by false tales, by misconceptions without a place in fact. The things that separate are there, but why should we add unreal things, why base ourselves on unworthy false beliefs ?

For even now we hear the strangest things of the Roman Catholic Church ; we are still told that somehow the devoted stream of life in her is obligatory and due to fear. We are still told by distinguished prelates of another Church, of the isolation of poor Catholics, of their separation from God and Christ, face to face with the pomp and power of this Church. Nor do I forget many other equally false things that were told me as facts, before I became a Catholic, by Anglican priests, in all good faith.

And these ignorances are so unnecessary and so pitiful ; their poor spirit leads to unworthy and vain thoughts, and it truly seems as though blindness and misunderstanding could go no further than this ; for Catholics think of their Church as their special home, it is there they go to pray, to sit, to think. All souls there are alike, no one counts more nor less, all are supported and fed by the Catholic Church.

There is no kind of isolation ; in her extremes meet, paradoxes are fulfilled ; we fear nothing in that holy place. The poorest is as welcome as the great,

the divine pity touches the outcast soul; and each receives at need a patient, impersonal care—a care that in our personaliness we most desire.

Catholics must get very tired of so much misrepresentation, so many false ideas; yet I have never heard them even mention them; nor have I heard them deplore, what, even as an Anglican I could not bear to see. I could not bear to feel myself in occupation of Catholic churches, filled with those touching witnesses of other hands, another sort of faith, now left empty and bereft of life. I felt we were as interlopers, living with no real right, in the loved home of an exile; we seemed to me like cuckoos, sitting in another's nest. Yet Catholics do not speak of this; they seem to have accepted their loss quite quietly, only their half-muted churches stand as irrevocable witnesses to their former life, while Catholics turn to build afresh for their souls' needs.

But it is no wonder that we have turned away from organised religion, no wonder that in our ignorance we have thought all Church religion inevitably without spirit, even hopelessly material. For since the Reformation that halved everything, as my uncle said, so much confusion reigns, so many voices speak, that it is difficult to pick out what is real, know what really counts today. The great conceptions of God, as of the spiritual life, have been nearly obscured; the ordinary person has had no opportunity even to learn what they are; but all unobserved the life of the

Catholic Church has remained, keeping for us, though hidden, the life of God.

When we begin again to learn of these great things, we find that we can never plumb the depth, height, breadth of religion's life; and we learn that this immense life has never varied, nor been extinguished, but only banished and then misconceived.

The misinterpretations that have hid the Church from our eyes begin to be cleared away, and in surprise we see a Church that is here, and that actually contains the spiritual life we desire; a Church that we have somehow known or guessed must exist somewhere, though unseen. We lost the sight of all this life, human and divine; but all the while the truths of God that the Church has gathered remain unchanged, eternally the same.

The Church that is eternal, however imperfect humanly, contains eternally the truth of God: for truth cannot change. And into the tide of Church (humanly speaking) everything falls—all sorts of queer, curious things that are part of the queer, curious spirit of man. But nothing troubles this great tide, everyone may sit on the Church's banks: she does not depend on men; her life that is apart from them is given to them; and, accepting them, she flows onward in a divine flood.

Perhaps it is best for Churches to be forsaken, persecuted, uncomfortable, denied. Perhaps that is the life intended for Church on earth, as it was her

Master's life before. The Bride of Christ must suffer to gain her full life here below, as through suffering the individual finds his own truest reality. The Church must live through darkness and doubt; her glorified life is not here, but to come. "To be comfortable, a comfortable Church, how vulgar that would be," I think I can hear my uncle say.

Church is our central testimony to the significance of the spiritual life; she is our witness to its reality; and in contact with her we see a stream of heroic, renounced, lives, a procession that goes far away, is here now, and will extend in ages to come.

Poor Church! How much she is misunderstood! Yet how she lives! How much she nourishes all souls, yet is denied!

So my father was hedged in, as many another, from seeing the goodness and truth of the Catholic Church, of Catholic lives; and in his own Church his spirit was left homeless and unfed, so he lived, without these helps or hindrances, his own heroic life.

And in connection with his conviction that no spirit could need a body, we have moved on to another view; for we now see and believe that the spirit *requires* a body, and that there is no division of spirit and body: we no longer despise the body, but we give it its share in the spirit's life, for they are truly one.

The light of Christ's life has enabled us to see this clear unity; the visible is the vehicle of the invisible,

and the spirit needs the body as its home. The divine life never separated them; he ever accommodated our bodies and spirits to each other, making them require and fit each other, depend on each other, in a complete unity of life.

But the body-and-spirit-religion we have learned now, had not properly emerged in my father's time; we go but slowly along our path towards understanding the mind of God. For we can only make approximations of His mind: God will never fit into our minds, we can never see Him as He is. Yet the Church has collected real intimations of God, and through the long centuries she has gathered and enshrined these intimations, that are as illuminations of the mind the spirit of God.

We are not left without some real knowledge of Him, and it is the Church that has enlightened our confusions, as it enlightens every man. And Church has taught us that we may speak to God, worship Him in prayer, and the life of prayer reveals to us something of the love of God.

Yet prayer is also, to many, a sealed book. For if their words express their true beliefs, the ordinary so-called Christian believes prayer to be but the unveiled askings for material benefits, importunate demands for prosperities and advantages that we can enjoy in this world—a horrible disclosing and travesty of our true selves. Or, in the case of mystical prayer, we hear it disposed of in greater scorn. It is an ele-

mental hystericalness, an extremely unpractical way of wasting time and obscuring the mind—a way to escape suffering and reality in an unreal bliss. Mystics, we hear, shut themselves thus away from suffering, and we listen in amaze to the descriptions of the prayer of contemplation that we hear; we cannot recognise the conceptions we are given of this prayer of pure love.

And there is really no connection with reality in these words, for however much in good faith all these beliefs may be held, they are furthest from the truth. For mystics seem truly to be given a force beyond our own; they carry through supernatural tasks and immense activities with ease; they have an abundance of life in which we do not share. And they seek to keep nearest of all to suffering, as the very touchstone of their lives; they seek to share in every pain. Their lives, in fact, fill us with amazement, for they are so exceptionally full.

There seems a curious ignorance in men in this matter of prayer; it seems almost wilful, a set determination *not* to know what prayer is. They talk in angry hostility and utter contempt, of what they betray a complete ignorance—an ignorance so dense that it seems impossible to even begin to explain.

The life of prayer is so deep and delicate we cannot bring its secret ways into the common light; the religious life itself is so full it can hardly be explained in words. These same people would hesitate, no

doubt, to talk of painting before a painter, or condemn music in the presence of Bach.

Yet in this so deep and difficult matter they feel no hesitations, no uncertainties; they believe they know all, without learning anything; they can expound with no practice. Strangest belief! for the actual practice of religion goes so very far, so very deep, it has its own fertile discipline, its own needs, its own technique. The things ignorant persons condemn as stupid, inadequate, or without any worth, may contain within themselves the germ of religion's very life. For religion is paradoxical and elusive to a degree; and the religious life is not composed of inspiration and ecstasy. Rather it lives in a humble fulfilling of a humble practice; the scales and exercises we need in every special activity to make our talent grow, are needed here more than anywhere. There is a wonderful knowledge behind all the special practice of the Catholic Church. To the simple religion remains simple, their way of abandonment to the will of God seems easy to them, for they are especially humble and faithful in all they do. But with the more complicated it is different, for they have so much to learn: a deep humility, a sense of their nothingness and dependence, a faithful perseverance and understanding—all these, with a deep knowledge of themselves, they have to learn. Religion, as it contains all, needs all we have; and if we are strong, clever, and able, we have to give

to Christ all our knowledge, balance, and wisdom, as well as faith, courage, and love.

And religion must never become just a hobby or an excitement; we lose it so. How often its deeply hidden life is tarnished, or even frittered away, in talking of it as though it were some ordinary occupation, some obvious life.

Even too great a concentration on it itself may lose us the spirit we seek; for religion needs for its full life all our other activities and interests, all we possess of mind, heart, and will. How easily it becomes just an unreal habit, a narrow groove, shutting off possibilities instead of opening them wide! Or it may become just personal, its purity and strength confined in an emotional personalness that is horrible, for we have to keep ourselves quiet and clear, detached from all exaggeration and excess; and religious emotion runs so fatally easily into cloudiness. So with my father: his spirit was specially fitted to the true spirit of religion; he loved things to be crystal clear, healthy, strong and true; yet this is so difficult to achieve by human beings, in human communions, that he turned from Churches, where these difficulties lie, to dwelling rather on the things that stay clear and alone. Yet he, too, was supported by many Church things. He loved most of all, and knew most intimately, the Church documents, the Old Testament, the Psalms—he filled himself with these, and his music expressed this spiritual love and knowledge,

this true religious spirit, most of all. He never rejected the great affirmations of religion about God, but he remained silent about them; and his passionate love of all things beautiful, his lonely communings under the stars—were not all these the witnesses to his deep hunger, to the true faith of his soul? And his faith seemed to linger thus round a God who remained inscrutable to him, and whose existence he wistfully sought; and of whom he once said to me, in answer to some question of mine, "We are not forbidden to hope."

VI

"VOCES CLAMANTIUM"

"You must try to understand the ways of the world without following them." These words, in a letter of my father's to me, were full of a sorely needed wisdom, but to which, I fear, I paid no sort of heed. I was not interested in the ways of the world, and the world seemed so far away from me that I thought I could safely ignore it, yet the world will not be ignored.

We are in this world, and have to be aware of it while we are here; we cannot shut ourselves up away from it; we need to understand it, for otherwise our ignorance becomes a limitation and hindrance; we have to realise and know all we can.

The ways of the world, when we first come face to face with them, seem very horrible: they do *not* bear any inevitable attraction; on the contrary, to many souls they are just dreary and dull. We leave our starry skies when we enter the world, and we find instead interests and desires from which we revolt; the beauty we have loved seems extinguished in the common light of day, and we cannot even conceive any attraction in all this.

The art of selecting and discriminating, of seeing

through common things, of tolerating what our fastidiousness at first rejects, of accepting things in which we cannot share—all this has to be learnt, and the learning may take us long. For the world's temptations do not always lie in worldly things; the lusts of the flesh, the desire of the eye, the pomp of the world itself—these do not appeal to all; but rather there is another kind of temptation—the temptation to fly the world, in scorn and dislike of poor humanity, to escape away from all we see of these. We have to pass through years of revolt, dislike, and intolerance; we have to learn to suffer fools gladly; we have even to learn we are fools ourselves—all this has to be learnt, and we are most miserable in this dull world. For we are disillusioned, dismayed, and there is nothing more miserable; and things we never dreamt could happen, happen every day; our faith is shocked and we lose courage ourselves as we observe the common low ideal, and enter a world so different from what we believed.

We expect too much, perhaps: we think we shall find that the world is filled with the glory we sought, in its substance, in its very self. Instead, there seems revealed an ideal *below* anything we ever thought; and an immense pain must fill all souls in their first real contact with ordinary life. My father's words were much needed, for as I had never taken any interest in human people, so I had not noticed the facts of human nature, the dread facts of sin and

sorrow. How can we best help souls who in their first discovery of these are nearly overbalanced? How comfort those whom the horror of sin nearly blinds? How shall we teach an untried ignorant sincerity not to impute sin? We seem to see that ignorance itself is our greatest difficulty; for with knowledge comes the power to interpret things, and to find that the humdrum dull world, the ordinary cold day, is still in touch with the enchanted; still holds in itself, though hidden, a beauty we cannot express. It seems often as though some great hand deliberately drops over all beauty an immense veil, covering the merest sparkle of shiningness, even taking from before our eyes the simple happinesses that we have loved—the joyful spring mornings, the starlings talking in the chimneys, the days of peace—and gives us instead the heaviest obligations, the dullest wakings, the pointless days of a dreary life. Is all this inevitable? Must we all enter into this hopelessness, at some time and in some form? And when and where can we trace the moment that marks the beginning of our escape?

Everything has to be learnt through some kind of mechanical process: the ground out of which a strong and real faith can finally spring, has to be tested in a long preparation. We cannot grow without hardness, difficulty, discipline; we have to come quite close to the things that hurt us, the things we hate. Human nature surely will hardly grow with-

out these long and costing years. Nobody ever learnt without first learning, knew without being taught; and the beginning of all learning starts through confusion and chaos, in dark blindnesses—just as the world lay in darkness, till God said "Let there be light."

So in our darkness we have to remain; and in our blindness we live as best we can, making multitudes of mistakes. How anyone ever bore with me during those years I never know! I was all ignorances, impatiences, dislikes, and prejudices, searchings for I knew not what. I gave up my music when I married without much thought, for it seemed to make too much of a claim on me, to take too much from me, so that I could not give enough to general life. Perhaps I was mistaken in doing this, for how I missed that ordered life, those four hours of regular practising, those exercises and scales! How marvellously helpful is an ordered life! For this music had held and kept me occupied: I had something that claimed me daily, took me out of myself; and now I had lost all this, and instead there were long empty days—and how without point these seemed!

My father, I believe, felt deeply, and deplored this waste and shutting off of my only gift. He did not say much, but he tried to get me to read instead, and what reading I did was inspired by him. But I did little, for I had sunk into a mental laziness, a disillusionment the more dense because it was so unreal.

I could not see that a perfect heaven is not, and cannot be, here in this world; and I was occupied in resenting this fact. How true it is that we make the world dull ourselves! For as I became more and more dull, I saw nothing worth while or interesting outside of myself. And how sad it is that our own unhappiness can cloud our eyes even to beauty! Yet I can remember the consolement of the still trees, the solace even of the grassy ground. I loved to gaze into these, and I would sit trying to recover something of my old happiness and poise.

These years are full of many voices; there must be these confusions, perhaps, in great spaces of our lives. In mine, I remember, attempts to restart my music, love of my home and friends, little conscious thought, many exterior doings and much active life.

Yet through a continued fastidiousness a more accommodating element began to emerge; and in these days the poor people in the village became my centre, by them I was refreshed. I accepted from them, as from my children, quite unconsciously, a new life. Through them I began to learn what I *had* to see, and what life means.

Poor people are not super-men, nor all heroes and heroines; they are but as ourselves. Yet with them everything counts so much, that they become extra real. They cannot escape from the reality of their lives. The objective value of poverty and struggle is brought close to us by them; we are brought close

up against real courage and cheerful endurance. Poor people tear open closed-up hearts; they enlighten our blind eyes. They are so unself-occupied, so unaware of their heroism, and they give us their affection so generously. Through them I gradually began to see a little of the world of souls, I began to occupy myself with lives quite different from my own. There were still failures and setbacks; what we have done we do again—we have to have an endless patience with ourselves. The mistakes and reluctances seem even to grow more as we are more conscious of them; the thieves return again and again to inhabit our empty house. Yet, on the whole and in the main, we have started on a different sort of life—a life that recognises its responsibilities not only to home and children, but to the outside world and to God.

I remember very clearly my first rediscovery, as it were, of the objective reality of God—the discovery that unchangeably He was still there. Up till now I had practised my religion in the Protestant way, going to Holy Communion in memory of our Lord's life upon earth. I had no real conviction about Him, no sense of what religion might mean. I prayed, but I prayed almost without hope; beyond anything I desired goodness, but I had no kind of idea that our goodness can be inspired and reinforced by Christ's.

And then one day, sitting alone on a wide Wiltshire down, listening to that soft wind that blows through down-grass, I suddenly became aware of

God; I recognised His utter perfection outside of myself, yet somehow connected with me; and I saw that there need never be the smallest fleck or cloud between this Perfection and me. I saw this Being who surpassed all I could ever think—of beauty, goodness, reality; I saw Him as the source of all this beauty, the only real in this passingness. I gazed upon this discovery: it took me right out of myself; and I saw that God gave and ensured our knowledge of Himself. I felt as some voyager who for many years has tossed without hope of release upon some cold vast sea, when suddenly close at hand he perceives home, rest, peace. We need the bitter bread of suffering, the black and bitter bread, in our human life; for not otherwise shall we learn to see the real behind the changing, nor desire the quickening life of suffering—the life that shows us the reality of Christ.

Some souls have to learn to love other souls, pass through many bitter waters before they finally grasp and understand the deep interconnection of all souls, and their loneliness and needs.

They have to be taught to see, taught to put themselves into the place of others, dragged out of themselves to sympathise and expand. To some, all this comes suddenly like a conversion; they have actually to see and realise the truth of real love. They are really unaware of a love that suffers with and for others, and the revelation it brings to them makes a new world.

Looking back on these long years I am amazed at the young people of today. For they have already gone so far, seen and done so much, understand at twenty what it took me thirty-five years to attain. They have already grasped significances, characteristics, human needs and desires, that our youth was entirely ignorant of; and they have a balanced and mature judgment that makes one wonder much where they will end. It may be I was extra stupid and dull: I think it was so. Yet I am sure that the average young person then, could not enter into different minds, nor truly grasp and make the essential discriminations that they can make now. Thinking of all this, one wonders where they will end; for having come so far already, what will they gather and see in retrospect?

Have they passed through that period of life when everything is so charged with beauty that the very atmosphere moves in myriad drops of light? Are they absorbed, obliterated, filled by this loveliness? Do these times and facts seem far more important to them, far more real than the world they actually see? Is everything ugly and daunting, quickly hidden and covered in this rapturous joy and light? And will they feel, too, that they pass on into a life where nothing fits, and where they cannot escape from the hard confining edge of ugliness, sin, and pain; where they must continually meet and compose the world's obdurate materialness; where visible activities, tables

and chairs, seem to enclose their very selves, confine their spirit, fetter all their life into this concrete world?

And will they towards the end find in an ever-growing joy the rightness and truth of that first vision that formed their earliest life—see that after all the things they cared for most then *were* the only real things? The beauties that made their whole life were truly the only things that count. And these go further, far further, than we thought; so that at the last beauty, the little glimpses of which we once saw, becomes not only the centre, the core, the heart of everything—but is as an immense radiation as the sun, and envelops everything we see.

Looking back, life seems to lie in three great parts—the time of childhood and youth with its intimate innate joy; the middle part that is so mixed and confused, almost yet not altogether without direction; when we have to endure through real darkness, and objects and facts completely hide our early hopes' transparencies. How utterly grown-up we then become, and the crowded confused days have to be made to clear, have to reach their own resolvancies. And at the last we have to fit into our own lives, the lives and desires, the activities and ideals, outside of our own experience. We cannot live our lives on a single stop, on one single note, as we may desire. There has to be a multiplicity that yet makes a full harmony, a conversion of many

discords; and the rough and jagged edges of these separate parts merge into each other, soundlessly, smoothly. Looking back, we see how we were carried past this and through that: we lived unaware of all this change in a curious, undiscovered country; and we accepted through all the passing time the helps and supports, the inspiration, of countless people and things. We see a reality emerging and taking substance even in our own lives, growing more and more real and clear through the passing of time. "Now we see through a glass darkly, but then face to face."

VII

MY FATHER'S SPIRIT

THROUGH all these years my father remained, in the most amazing way, the centre of my life, the pivot round which everything turned. His ready, eager interest, his unalterable sense of enjoyment, and the incentive of his arduous life were all a kind of perpetual call to one—a perpetual holding up of the things that matter and count. Without his sympathy and understanding, as without his unflinching principles, it seems as though one might have fallen into some sort of morass and been engulfed. God, as my uncle would have said, sends these people for us, who are weak, to hold on to; we accept our life from them. And there were never two ways with my father; he required of us a complete correspondence to what he saw, and believed right: perhaps he was almost too rigorous. Yet this certainty of conviction is an immense strength, an enormous support for weaker souls. He may have demanded much, but this disclosed the reality of that which informed the passionate grasp of his soul. He was built almost as a Puritan, with so severe a restraint; but this disciplined life never prevented his enjoyment, but rather doubled it, for our happiness is but spoilt in any sort

of excess, and he seemed to enjoy everything : the spirit that never despised small things was most essentially his. What fun he made round meals ! Cooking, gardening, walking, reading aloud ; nothing to him was ever dull or not worth while. In fact, I cannot imagine the point of view in him that finds these ordinary things dull ; the commonplace, everyday things were to him all delightful, all fun.

And his life was kept in that moderation of Socrates, that neither the great beauties nor deeper enthusiasms ever disturbed or upset. In this tranquillity he loved everything specially—yet specially without any excess. This balance of his actual life was, perhaps, the thing we noticed most in him, the thing that he most enjoined on us. I can well recollect his obvious and cold distaste of those people who always do everything too much ; he was intolerant of people who rush after things with an immoderate enthusiasm ; he could not bear to see that—to this day his example has so stamped itself upon myself, that I feel nervous and unhappy when I see people doing any one thing to excess. Yet no one could fill life with more delight than he ; he was a living witness to the joy that lives in this natural restraint. His arrival for a visit of a few days, or even a few hours, was the herald of happiness, the awakening to buoyant life. I can never forget the excitement of these visits, the rushing downstairs to meet that eager figure already in the hall, the warm loving welcome ; the cheeks that

always scratched one's own, as the children said, yet were so nice and firm to kiss; and the peculiar growling noises of his affection; what special and delightful joys were all these! The children were always filled with the same exhilaration in his presence, for with him everything entered at once into this real and warm life. There were, immediately, plans for expeditions—long days of happiness, tightly packed with events, and seeming to pass in an almost endless vista of delight. And the long cloudless summer days that I remember, were not more happy than the wild storms and winds, which he so specially loved. Yet his spirit was often deeply isolated, shadowed; depressions covered him, and he seemed gone from us in a darkness and suffering so intense that his face was clouded, losing completely its characteristic brightness. At these times one waited—for the flying joy of his nature always returned, the sun in its brightness would burst out again, the clouds passed.

During the years of the war my father was very changed: his spirit became saddened and weighed down. He could not recover the buoyancy that before had been so remarkable in him; and though he still gave to us the power of his enjoyment that he retained to a degree so far beyond the ordinary, yet it was now an effort, the more so as he was ill and very tired. He would often speak now of the time when he was gone, "when my end comes" he

would say, making plans for my mother—and thoughts for many of us. Yet he never spoke (to me, at any rate) of any future life, never expressed any consoling hope: he seemed rather to be in a quiet sadness, in a resolute courage accepting whatever came; and one could not question so deep a reserve.

At the very beginning of the war, in that so fatal week of September, we were down at Dartmouth with him (myself and my husband and the three children), spending our days on his yacht, sailing round the coast, and sleeping on shore; and these days are a strange mixture of the loveliness and sadness of a last adventure, and the terrible anxiety of the war. For we were in the middle of that first retreat, and knew not what would happen, and the daily bad news was a great shock to him; the realisation of our unpreparedness and our over-confidence shook him, as many others at that time. He was silent, suffering in a readjustment of the horizon, and seeing that the war would last very long; and that our entry did not mean the utter collapse of Germany, as had been foretold. How he ridiculed, too, with his usual commonsense, the story of the hordes of Russians who were crossing England to reach the front! And though given chapter and verse by those who thought they had actually seen them, he refused to believe.

After a week's sailings here, and wonderful expeditions in his motor-boat up the Dart, we went on

to Lulworth, where he joined us one evening on his way home. The restrictions on yachting had become too close, and he could not continue his sailing. I remember that when he left us we climbed the hills round Lulworth Cove, and watched him disappearing far away into the haze. It was evening, and very still, and the sun caught his tall white sail; and as she passed from sight I knew I would never see the yacht again.

Thus with the commencement of the war, his sailings came to an end. And from now on he motored and bicycled in his holidays; and these things did not refresh him like the yachting, for they kept him in the midst of his work and ordinary life: he escaped nowhere, and from no anxieties. As with everyone else at this time, his work was more than doubled, and his strength and vitality grew less.

Life became sadder, and his tenderness suffered: for he remained always so like a child, so sensitive and loving, treasuring the things that told of happy memories; stones and queer little bits of things, of precious memory, that he loved—" No one can take our memories from us," he would say.

No one was less sentimental; in fact, he could not tolerate any sentimentality; yet he never went out without saying a loving goodbye to his family: he could not bear to leave anyone without some word of love. Even the little flower he always wore in his buttonhole was tenderly cherished and touched, and carefully put in a glass of water while he worked.

Perhaps the thing that remains most clear and striking in him, till the end, was this loving child-likeness. For no matter how full of work, in the midst of so much drudgery and complication, this lovely spirit remained ever present, answering to the smallest touch.

The dew on the cobwebs, the pattering of the poplar leaves, the red spears of the fir-trees, the songs of birds, the evening walk to the sea—all these things utterly delighted him, they filled him with joy.

Perhaps the sea remained for ever the thing that was nearest to his heart; he never failed to go down to it at some time in the day, and usually before dinner he would say: "Coming down to the sea with me?"

Almost the last thing he asked me in his last illness was to go down and see how the tide was, and when I came back to tell him it was far out, he turned his face away and said: "I shall never see it more."

He was ill just three weeks, of a strange, mysterious illness—painful to watch. His preoccupation was always of the war; but he seemed to feel the peace at last coming, and daily begged us to read to him all the news. He died a few weeks before the Armistice, on October 7, so he did not actually know the peace for which he longed.

Religion itself is a great suggestion—and my father, remaining silent of all affirmation, yet made this great suggestion to us, opened an infinite possibility before our slow-seeing eyes. His life was an inspira-

tion, a true witness to the reality of the spirit, a witness that braces, a witness that consoles. He stands for the changeless things, the power of order and courage, as he never turned from the path he had chosen to tread. For in his quest of reality he pursued goodness as a supreme value; his sensitively spiritual soul could make no truce with any this-worldness, nor endure any lowering of his noble ideal. So that it is through what he loved that we find the truest affirmation of what he believed; through his heroic life we see what counted to him, we learn what he sought to fulfil.

We see how his soul must have suffered and hungered, in a deep aloneness, for some clearer vision, for some ultimate hope; for some clear answer to his soul's clear call. And the answer comes to *us* perhaps in his givingness, in the generous love he gave so unsparingly to one and all: and in the pure, joyful spirit that rose in him to encourage all whom he knew, with no thought of self, whatever the cost.

And did he perhaps receive his own answer and know quite clearly before the end? A few days before he died he sat up and, stretching his arms out widely, he spoke as though already far from us, to Someone in another world, saying clearly: "O God—I *see*."

And in his face, as he fell back, there shone a light of utter appeasement, a complete and marvellous joy.

Whatever that sight, it was a supreme enlightenment; whatever the answer, it fulfilled all he sought.

VIII

HUBERT PARRY AND FRIEDRICH VON HÜGEL

Parallel Lives

After my father's death life became totally different, entered a more closed-in channel, became throughout harder and more significant, without any of those pauses and alleviations that he gave to us. No longer were there expectations, almost childish, of happinesses to come; no longer did one receive his seeking care and love. Gone was the centre that radiated livingness; gone the being who contained within himself the life that inspired one's own.

It is easy to live long parts of life through others' knowing, ignoring one's own ignorances, pushing away facts; it is easy to accept things without accounting for them: and just so had I lived up till my father's death, accepting each day, each thing, without any particular thought. Almost marvellous is the ignorance in which we can thus live—ignorance of ourselves, of other souls, as of the world—yet all the time truth may be working within us, purifying us, fitting us, perhaps, for some other knowledge that is to come.

About two years before my father's death I had

begun reading under my uncle the Baron; at first things literary and historical, without any idea on his part, I think (nor on my own), of anything definitely religious or spiritual, at any rate not at the start. He had suggested this reading one day when I went to luncheon with him, at Vicarage Gate; asking me if I had time for it and would like it, and as I was at that time living alone in lodgings at Tunbridge Wells, with my little girl at a day-school, I welcomed this reading, and we started, I remember, with a history of Rome.

I had not seen my uncle then since I was a child, and how very different he seemed to me now! No longer the strange, rather terrifying being who had been caught and enclosed in a totally unsuitable world. Now he was happy, genial, easy: turning his ear-machine this way and that, to hear all that was said; telling inimitable stories, laughing infectiously. How one's spirit rushed to meet his, no longer afraid!

[My uncle was a great laugher, and much later on, when he was teaching me definitely religious things, there used to come such shouts of laughter from the garden where we sat, that his daughter remarked to me that religion must be the most amusing thing in the world, judging by the laughter she heard.]

So in this way he planned the reading that was to last many years, and the first effort towards some definite education in my life. From the beginning he used to write me wonderful letters and postcards

of advice and encouragement, but these early letters got, somehow, alas ! lost or destroyed. I remember one postcard that was so particularly characteristic of him, about "that monstrous tyrant Domitian," and when the doings of Nero and his informers were discovered to be giving me nightmares and alarms, they were at once forbidden as impressing themselves too much on my mind.

We had read, like this, for nearly two years, when my father died ; and it was not till after his death that my uncle commenced giving me definitely religious things—taking his place as a teacher and witness, giving me the testimony of other spirits, through different forms and ways, to the objective reality of the things which had inspired my father's life as they inspired his own.

Along this way he led me, showing me where the beauty that one had seen and loved belongs—to what we are joined as by a chain, and where all our possible knowledge of love and joy has its source.

Thus beginning with Christian things, we reached on to where his own spirit lived and was informed. I learnt of the true spirituality of great Christian souls, and was taught something of the practice of religiously consecrated and devoted lives. I saw a little of those hidden heroic lives, hitherto utterly unknown to me.

It is deeply illuminating to compare the mind and spirit that inspired my father with that of my uncle.

But it is impossible for me to do more than indicate the lines on which they based their lives. The actual development of their vision, the material and texture of their minds, the many shoots and blooms of their growing spiritual life, all of this is very far beyond what I can seize or write.

Their oppositeness stands out very clear, the oppositeness not of ideals, but of way; and it was combined with an alikeness that is proved by the fact that my father's life was lived as the very expression of my uncle's desire and faith. One might place each as a representative of his separate type: yet this placing of people in types is never satisfactory, for no person ever conforms perfectly to any type; there are always elements that belong somewhere else, things that put us completely out. And we never really know enough to add together the separate parts of any character; we cannot see enough to discover and announce the secret of their personality. People do not add themselves up like sums; there are always things that escape us, and will not be defined; and in placing people in definite groups we may miss the very thing that marks the individual's essential character. So we can only generalise, only place types in a *general* sense together thus in groups. And the greater the souls, the more they will escape from any rules; the richer the content, the less we are able to trace and confine their spirits' especial significance.

With these two great souls, so significant as types, we see that their ultimate values were the same: they both sought the same ideas, were bound by the same principles, and they shared in an alikeness of spirit that is quite curiously illuminating. Yet on their way to achieve these ideals they employed quite opposite things, leant on convictions that would not meet.

In an almost hardness of spirit my father pursued his way, so strong was his conviction of the mistakenness of any other; while my uncle, though more tolerant, followed equally his own thought, pursued the vision that led to the recognition of a true reality and a human necessity, in the very things my father denied. Their lives ran parallel, they were related through their marriage to two sisters, knew each other well, and admired each other; yet a certain separation and even misunderstanding was inevitable, for their personal unlikeness was as great as their convictions were opposed.

My uncle, through his close contact with the spirit of Christianity, was helped to understand and love my father, in a way that perhaps the latter could hardly achieve. For my uncle almost reverenced my father; humbly admired the generosity of his love, and the purity of his spirit; and he expressed this recognition to me very often, in words that were deeply moving, and that I cherish in memory.

My father was more on the defensive as regards my uncle; he did not fully understand so different

a mind; and his hatred of Roman Catholicism gave him an almost inevitable distrust of anyone so truly Catholic. This prejudice inevitably obscured his vision. As we have seen, his dislike of any Church practice, of any definite creed or dogma, was so tremendously real, that he turned away instinctively from the people who stood first and foremost for the value of these very things.

This dislike of organised religion which dominates so many souls is easily understandable, and was never more explicit and obvious than in my father's youth. It was a great revolt against a material Church, a great hungering for the worship of God in spirit and truth. Man can obscure God in Churches, as anywhere else; and religion can get so curiously mixed, so strained and narrow, that souls of a certain type almost *must* react against it, if what they have observed corresponds only to this limited ideal. They cannot but deny the reality and value of a religious presentment that appears but an empty shell; we cannot blame the spirit that flies away, if this is all they have been given to see. For perhaps they cannot perceive what is behind all these obscuring clouds; they do not recollect what they really owe to a great Church.

This was all the more curious because in his spirit my father owed so much to the great genius of religion, and his spiritual mind was ever fed by a religious aspiration most completely real. He was truly in-

spired by the religious spirits of Isaiah, of Job, of the Psalms; he was so truly versed in them, and lived so close to their souls, that something of their nobility and beauty seems to have passed into himself. And he was touched almost to speechlessness by the movingness of Christ; he could not find words in which to tell me what His great figure meant to him. And these great knowings and perceptions that he so loved have been gathered, after all, by Church; we know them through the documents, actually through the eyes, of Church. And the mysterious God that he worshipped and desired, is He not, too, found for us by Church?

But in people such as my father it is not what they deny that counts, but what they see and affirm in their everyday lives. A negation has no potential life for anyone—it holds no livingness—but an affirmation is as a branch that is bursting into leaf; it is so full of a positive life that its very sight inspires. So we do not need to dwell on what my father denied—we gaze instead on what he valued, what he lived. These are the things that are valuable beyond the power of words: they are as vines covered in living fruit.

We gaze on what he was and what he did—not only as he expressed himself in his work and in his music, but in his practical life—and there we see him closely in contact with suffering, shielding himself from no difficulty, but most especially pressed up

against loneliness and pain. We see expressed so abundantly the sympathy and understanding that are utterly real because they are lived, and we see the kindness that seeks to help all souls in love.

Perhaps the only atmosphere in which he seemed daunted and chilled was that of a definite faith, a militant creed. We see that these things stung his mind, silenced his happy spirit; here alone he became unlike himself and constrained. He adapted himself to all other demands, turned himself to accept all aspects, desired no protection or consideration; and, at the end his death came almost unrecognised, so humbly did he accept it and go, with no regard or concern for himself.

Thus his life was lived with no sort of self-occupation; he threw away from himself any shelters, as any separateness. Perhaps no one could live more eagerly, more intensely; give more abundantly to others of his spontaneous inherent joyfulness. He was always busy, always working; yet, though often very physically tired, his spirit was never spent. In fact, he remains one of the great witnesses to the reality of spirit, to the tremendous power that dwells in our souls. Continually revealed to us through countless lives and occasions, in a deathless life, this spirit testifies to the reality of God.

And my uncle's life had to be lived in an almost opposite way. From the first he had to accept ill-

health that kept him like a prisoner; and deafness that, though he never spoke of it, must have held him back from many things; and he had to be protected, sheltered, managed for, all his life. He was obliged to practise many "self-coddlings" in order to achieve his work. He had no abundance of life, no *joie de vivre*; and though ordered and punctual to a degree in all he did, he was unpractical and vague in a worldly sense. He lived in a deep interior world —where few, perhaps, can follow—giving himself to an interior life; tearing, as it were, out of himself great chunks of truth and bringing them to the surface, explaining to us what we can gather and understand. He had not my father's zest and happiness, his almost passionate love of nature and adventure; he could not practise the hardships my father enjoyed, nor rush out as he to meet the exigencies of everyday life.

"I kiss my child because I love it; I kiss my child to make me love it more." How often the truth of these words of the Baron's penetrates me, and in so many relations! My father's love itself grew thus, in this abundance, in this outward giving; and my uncle's grew in a deep interior life.

As my father grew older, his spirit was more patient —it mellowed; his grasp grew firmer as his reach was wider; and we see this mellowing in my uncle too. Gone are the absolute statements, the curtailments of certainty, in both cases. My uncle burrowing deep

in his underground caverns—following, constructing, explaining—found room for all sorts of thought, all kinds of belief; and my father's spirit that sprang up so joyously to meet and give to humanity was the very spirit my uncle sought.

The Baron was no high-brow thinker, no philosopher dwelling in cold worlds apart. No, his life was intensely human, full of small activities, homely loves: sensitive to all sufferings, wistful, passionate, childlike; upset by quite little things—hurt by "hurricanes of antipathies," as he would say, yet always keeping close to God.

He was as sharing with us, as my father, in all we did; indeed, his sharing meant even more perhaps, as his delicacy suffered in all sympathy; in any difficulty he had to pay so high a price.

If he lived, in some ways, in those deserts he spoke of, yet he remained nearest of all to his fellows, needing them, delighting in them; loving most his wife and home and children, his little dog. Even cinemas and jigsaws and reading aloud to the parlour-maid were most important to him; he was never a superior person, living apart.

No, his was a tender heart, hurt by all change, sensitive to a degree over illness and death. Yet he accepted all these bravely, giving to each its proper place. It is here that my uncle's and my father's spirit meet; it is here that in their essential life they actually join.

Their oppositeness of way, even of belief, melts away in the reality that lies deep below their active life; for we find in them the same virtues, the same principles, the same desires. The spirit that was truly themselves was constancy, purity, unworldliness; they embraced the same courage, and were filled with the same true love.

They both remained, all through the intricacies and immense demands of their lives, utterly simple and childlike; their spirit never grew old or weary, never tarnished or dull; and we see them turning more and more towards the humble and little things of life, touching these with their most tender love. Somehow God seems to live most in little things; it is not the strong and the great that call to Him, we find Him in the gentle and soft.

And in their lives they show us most this utterly unselfish love—a love that is unself-occupied, unself-regarding, absorbed in things outside of itself.

In them this love flourished, grew, endured, achieved; it is a love that can only perhaps reach its fullest life after many years. We gaze on this love alone, at the last; for, shorn of life's encumbrances and entanglements, it rises most clear; and we see this love filling our emptinesses, overshadowing our lives. It is so brightly illuminant that it enlightens and establishes for us the reality of other spheres.

PART TWO

BARON FRIEDRICH VON HÜGEL

What shall I render to God for all He hath rendered unto me?

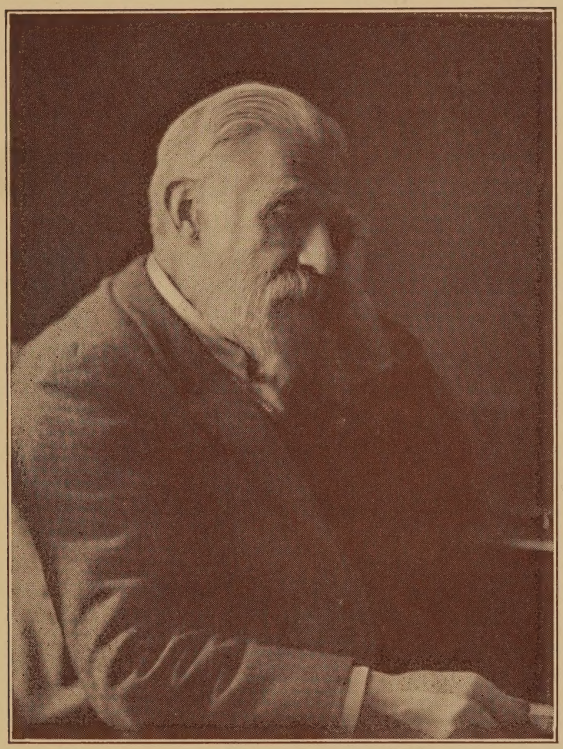
PSALM CXVI. 12.

And He sighed deeply in spirit, and He asked, Why doth this generation seek after a sign?

ST. MARK VIII. 12.

Lord, to whom shall we go? Thou hast the words of Eternal Life.

ST. JOHN VI.



BARON FRIEDERICH VON HÜGEL

IX

CONVINCED LIVES

GREAT people are so unified that their whole personality is imbued with their essential convictions; they do not have to assert them in a separation from themselves, but give them to us as part of their very being: they *are* themselves, and we accept them as simply as they give them to us. Thus we come to depend on the convinced lives of certain persons whom we know; their sincerity becomes our own strength. It is only when we come to regard lesser people, as ourselves, that we see how differently we work, how differently we are made; and we see how difficult it is for us to achieve this sort of unity. For our convictions seem as separate elements within ourselves, intractable, disturbing, even impossible to grasp or to explain. We feel there is within us a large opaque mass, composed of thoughts, feelings, observations and discriminations—things which we have never explored or understood, and that remain in this mass and unclarified. We do not even know how to approach a thing so large; it daunts our ignorance.

For the ordinary person is very ignorant, his unlearnedness has never been informed with the power

of knowledge; from childhood his mind has been thus handicapped. So we do not know how to set to work, to make deductions, to be logical, to discern and construct into substantial shapes the vaguely floating things we see. How often I feel this myself—the handicap of sheer unletteredness! For I can hardly discover what it is I think, and I am quite unable to express its substance in words!

We are really unable, then, to tear up out of ourselves, to express and give something of their true worth, to the convictions we feel. They are buried deeply within us, and we recognise their presence, even feel them striving for expression, but we have to remain dumb, we cannot bring them out. It is almost an agony sometimes to the ignorant to suffer this inarticulateness. They struggle as with some being that desires to be born, but cannot achieve its liberty; they are torn by this unknown creature who lives unnamed within their human house. And how we hate to betray before sceptical eyes the truth that has moved mountains for us! For it is terrible to stammer over the things that move us most!

Everyone nowadays is so tolerant, so easy; to feel things deeply, to see them even, as large and great, is so queer. Toleration is a friend to be feared, almost an enemy. For toleration has led to indifference; the times of burning words and faith are past. No one really believes now that romance and beauty can dwell in some one thing; there is even an inability

to affirm, that halves the power to achieve in the modern world. We are all only halves: half this and half that; we have adapted ourselves too much; we hide what makes our differences from other eyes, and we almost hide it from ourselves.

It is easier to follow convictions in action than in speech: we are less self-conscious in what we do than what we say, and one is often surprised by the convinced action of someone we know, who has never allowed us to suspect in him the presence of any determined belief, any positive faith.

These too, perhaps, are held back by a self-consciousness and the fear of words. For words are a great limitation, almost a complete hindrance to some people; the things we see are so much greater than the words we know. And we do not like to give things away, to let them down, in explanations that are so tame they make us blush.

We get very easily into the way of hiding our thought, of being silent, about what we really feel; we try to meet every point of view comfortably, to accommodate ourselves to all we find.

Thus we become all things to all men, as St. Paul said of himself. We temporise and qualify, afraid of things in ourselves, afraid to be thought singular. We seem more afraid of our convictions than of anything we have.

There is some wisdom and some rightness in this attitude too. For there are things that only get

spoiled if they are said. They need a secret special life in which to grow, and a great strength lies in hiding things. How often I have felt saddened and bereft, after speaking of what should stay undisclosed! For these secret things lose part of their actual life, and flee away from our sight, if we attempt to violate their secrecy. They do not desire to be handled, pushed this way or that; they escape right away from us if we proclaim them in the common light of day.

Yet if we are really called on to speak of what we believe, to explain what has moved us most, we must not hesitate nor hide. We need not betray any secret presences, but we must give out, as far as we are able, the reality of things as we know them, or else we are unfaithful to those things that we most love.

When we belittle the worth of things, and leave out their strength and depth, we betray their very life. And where do betrayals lead? "And Peter went out and wept bitterly." Often these words enter my mind, as I recall my own failures, my own betrayals, of every day.

We must come out into the open then, say what we really mean, risk our greatest treasure before scornful eyes, swallow our self-conscious sensitiveness, and proclaim what we really believe. We must not limit ourselves to a cold intelligence, nor paralyse through fear the power that lies in any definite affirmation, any definite act of faith.

When we fear to be thought fools, we must remember that fools wield a great power. For the lives that have counted most to their fellows have been those who have not feared, but have followed in a faithful life, the sincerity that cannot accommodate itself to the average world.

Great people never fit; but those who move mountains do not bow down to this paralysing fear. How often in our isolated lives we depend on the memories of individuals, on souls we have never known perhaps, but of whom we have heard or read.

How often we think of these who have made their affirmations with their lives! For what streams of life flow from an affirmation! What a creative fact is an act of faith!

The facts we lean on in our own weakness are those obstinate faithful facts of heroic lives. Buried away, perhaps, in worlds far from us, dying in deserts, and in failure, or destroyed in following strange calls that we may not perhaps understand, these heroisms support our own spirit, and we consciously seek the support of these lives. We know them to contain a positive and everlasting strength.

How marvellous are the convinced lives that overleap centuries, that swallow countries in the time of a thought! They seem to embrace some kind of eternal life, and are not bounded by our common mortality; and ignorant simple people as ourselves

have lived these lives, and become the support of all humanity.

> "Only the actions of the just
> Smell sweet and blossom in the dust."

So while we hide what we believe, others positively affirm it, and thus radiate as a centre of life through all eternity.

If only we had the same courage! If only we could admit the reality of what we have seen, the reality of impossible things; and the reality of what we have gained in seeing something face to face! What, then, might we not accomplish in ourselves! And what train of life might we not light!

We hear of people going off on some heroic adventure, following some unthought-of call; and we pause to gaze on these, and the world gazes too—not to mock nor to criticise as we might expect, but humbly to wonder and admire. And as individuals we say: "How I wish I could do something like that! How I wish there was something for me to do!"

For people are truly waiting for their moment, seeking the thing that will suddenly enlighten and unify their soul. There is a kind of restlessness that stumbles over little things, but longs to hear some single demanding call. So how we push people back, instead of helping them, when we hide from them the realities we have seen, the convictions we feel. How utterly useless we become when we apologise for

these convictions, qualify and diminish what we know to be real. We must not make things all the same colour, pretend everything is easy and small, make great things conform with the average, for we suffocate their potential life in such denials.

How much we see this in the Baron ! It never occurred to him to hide from us what he meant or felt ; his soul spoke in all that he said. He did not hesitate before difficulties, or possible misunderstanding ; he gave us the full measure of everything he saw in all its requirements and implications and possibilities, and he was not afraid of those whose intellectual superiority finds faith the refuge of those who cannot think.

How supreme is the power and the influence in a conviction of truth ! The Baron tempered the wind to the shorn lamb, but never by minimising the greatness of things in themselves. He gave us these things in their reality, true to what they were and what they cost. He did not halve their immense possibilities by accommodating them to us ; he did not endeavour to make them fit into our small minds.

True, he gave us our choice ; he never forced upon us things that we did not like ; never tried to make us say we liked or understood things that we could not grasp. He would even, as he constantly said, help us to go in a different, or even an opposite, way to his own ; there was no idea in his mind of seeing truth in only one way, of conforming us all to one type.

We see so often, in helping souls, this necessity of clearing other paths, of giving substance to things we could not follow ourselves. For in these difficult things we all need some special clearness and strength, and we all need to gaze on things that are beyond us; we want to be absorbed by the things that we can neither achieve nor contain. To grow we must simply try to accept and recognise these great things, not gaze on things the same size as ourselves.

So he always said: "Do not try to say you understand or like things when you do not. Never try to force yourself to find things helpful for this or that reason when they do not help. Put them on one side, not angrily or impatiently as not for you, never for you, but leave them; they may or may not be for you. But let them wait now."

So the things in themselves wait: it is we who have to grow and change.

"I try to live this, I try to work this into my life." These words of his were made actual in one's sight, for in his life how moved one was to see this effect of his living faith!

Surely the greatest incentive in our own personal lives, the greatest illumination we can ever have, is the power and vision of a renounced life, the obvious acceptation in love and joy of the will of God. This moves mountains, and this is the true following of our convictions—nothing more nor less; we recon-

struct ourselves upon their livingness. And in religion, as in other things, we are made free by practising certain rules—we are made free by certain definite facts. The Baron's insistence on this, as on some determination in ourselves, was utterly true. We must embrace some fundamental fact, from out of which our ordered liberty will spring. We need a hard kernel, a central fact of faith, for a vague religiousness will never carry us over any stony path: no power or love resides in a loose and easy belief.

The religion that affirms "I can worship God quite as well on a down or by the sea; I can find my religion everywhere," is but a kind of unreal sentimentalism that in the burning touch of real life is shrivelled away. We want a deeper, a more solid, recognition than that.

A definite form of belief, the limitation (if you like to call it so) of words and acts, the rules of a common life in which we all can share, this is what we require, and this is a nucleus of Church. We see everywhere the positive power that an organised fact gains; and human beings require so much more than individually they can contain and achieve: they need to be continually reawakened, reconverted, reinforced by other minds and souls. The individual ever needs a life beyond his own. How constantly I find the dropping back of my own single spirit needs the tide of other souls, their love lifts and carries me over the sands and rocks on which I lie, as by a flood.

X

MY UNCLE AND THE ROMAN CATHOLIC CHURCH

When my uncle said, "And now we will begin Christian things," I felt a great nervousness invade my soul. I wondered what was about to happen to me: I almost longed to run away from him, or to expostulate. For had I not all my life been taught a great fear of the Roman Catholic Church?—a fear so real that even now, at forty, the idea of learning about religion from a Roman Catholic really shook my soul. Should I not find myself getting entangled in some sort of web? Was there not a hidden purpose behind my uncle's so innocent-sounding words?

How little did I understand my uncle's soul! How little the mind and soul of the Roman Catholic Church!

From the beginning of my life I had imbibed, almost inherited, a distrust and dread of the Catholic Church; I thought of her as a clutching hand that dragged and bound one as a prisoner is bound. And just here was the first utter misconception of her spirit that I found, the first complete falsification of her real life—a fabrication so untrue that it seems like an in-

vention of the Evil One, a prejudice with no ground beneath on which to tread.

For the Catholic Church is really the exact opposite, in her ways, to this common belief. She is so austerely engrossed in the spiritual reality of her life that she requires of us a recognition of that reality that at first we may hardly be able to produce and profess. And my uncle was a witness to this necessity; he spoke with her voice when he continually held one back, saying one was not ready, and that one was to wait. An unconvinced Catholic gave him so much pain, and he knew how ignorant I was of what Catholicism means—he saw how much I must learn before I could understand the true meaning and life of a Supernatural Church.

And the knowledge I had to gain was furthest from where I stood: I had first to learn to tolerate any sort of Church. For with my sort of upbringing Church was hardly bearable; I looked upon it as a hard and limiting Institution, an invention of man's to make the best of two worlds. I had not seen any of those lives whose utter self-sacrifice appeals and inspires, nor had I heard the words that move our souls. I had only seen a very average Church, in a very average material world — and the average and material do not appeal. The Church I had known did not express any special intimations, nor any close knowledge of God; and, with certain real exceptions, the Church people I had known were obviously

content in an apparently this-world Church. God seemed to me even to be treated as their personal belonging, as a being who conformed to all their thoughts; and I could not bear this personal owning, this subjective presentment of God. I did not wish to follow them, nor to be as they, nor did I want what they had; and I imagined that all Churches were the same.

All this my intolerance and ignorance could hardly endure: I had, therefore, to embrace a different point of view, see with different eyes—I had to learn that God could actually abide in a Church.

My uncle's first step seems always to have been, as it were, a movement towards two things—that is, he endeavoured to make Church really clear and habitable to one, and he endeavoured as well to give one the knowledge that Church itself deepened one's sense of God. All this was utterly new to me, for it had always seemed that I had to put God into Church myself, not that He was there first to receive me as my uncle taught. "Church does not dumb one's spirit," he would say in answer to words of mine; and "God is there long before you." He wished to obliterate all my critical fastidiousness as utterly unworthy and un-Christian—furthest from the Spirit of Christ; and he wanted to show me those souls whose practice in the spiritual life was inspired and nourished by Church. Yet in the English Church there are many who are as ignorant as I was then; for one of the most curious things about the ordinary English-

man is his ignorance of his own religion, his ignorance of his Church. He cannot tell you, usually, anything at all of what Church means to him ; and he expresses ideas so fantastic, so far from the reality of Church, that they are very sad. He readily admits that he does not really know at all what Church means and is ; and often he can hardly tell one even vaguely what he believes.

Yet, though he lives in this strange ignorance of the spiritual world, he is deeply loyal to his religion, as to his Church. He accepts generously many different ways and forms of belief; and he is neither disturbed nor distressed by the varied explanations he is given of the nature of God. He believes that no one can really know any facts about God, so anyone may explain Him as best suits his mind, and he leaves it at that. The confusions of his Church have hardly penetrated him in any real sense, and the practice of the spiritual life does not enter his own. He cannot imagine, for instance, what Retreats are for, and the very words used in religion like "recollection," "interior life," or such, are an unknown language to him: he asks what they mean. He believes Church to be beneficent, and he accepts her as a spiritual fact; he accepts her as he accepts the State—without question; and he is not troubled by his ignorance. To worship God on Sundays, and to say his prayers, helps him to be good, and he knows no more than this in himself. When he suffers he feels a real need

of God; in misery he seeks for tokens and signs of His Reality.

To the average person, the man in the street, God thus remains very far away; and he lives his life without gaining that knowledge of God that should be his.

How lost we become without the teaching that we require! For thus was I left till I met my uncle, and thus are many left for whom Christ died.

We need those who can reveal to us that God is near, and that the centre we most need and desire dwells in Church. We need those who can show us that there we can gain our true balance, live an ordered interior life—a life that does not depend on happenings, but on another actualness. We need to be shown that there we can truly find the words of Eternal Life.

We seem left to gain (or not to gain), by ourselves, this knowledge of another life. Yet God does not really leave things so. He is not idle: He gives us of His supernatural life in ways most marvellous. He does not require us to know before He gives us a knowledge of Himself. He gives before we recognise; accepts from us what we are, and teaches us through some simple seeing; or reveals Himself to us through witnesses, and behold we live.

God seems to inspire and sustain the most the childlike simple efforts of man. He seems to have no part in the strength and greatness the world admires.

The light that enlightens every man is a humble hidden light: it shines in singleness and darkness; and the just average person can be pierced by this dark light that thenceforward illuminates his sight.

It may be many years before we find these treasures of another world. We may remain long in a dull dreary life, unaware of the nearness of our deliverance. We are buried under the weight of material things, and the realness of the spiritual life remains undisclosed till the moment God chooses arrives.

Or perhaps we have refused countless times to open our eyes; perhaps we have pushed away the realities we have been offered, till we are forced to recognise them face to face.

We do not know at what moment the seed sown in our souls began to germinate, for the spirit's life in ourselves is entirely unobservable. But we see that suffering is fertile, and perhaps its secret food is what brings us eventually to a knowledge that is different from the world's knowings: from the ground of suffering our real knowledge of God may spring.

The knowledge that we discover then is called into a truer being by Church, and is fed by her; she brings us into a more than natural life, a life where our ordinary desires drop and are dead—the supernatural life is all, and embraces all, in itself.

And Church calls to us to make our home in her; there we find we can be utterly natural, utterly our-

selves : we lose our self-consciousness, as all covering ; we throw ourselves away as we enter a Church. We lose ourselves in a great otherness, forgetting what we are : absorbed as a grain of sand is swept away into a great sea, we are immersed.

" I have loved the beauty of Thy house, and the place where Thy glory dwelleth." " I will worship Thee in a great Church !"

The first step is taken ; our vague, dim religiousness is suddenly clothed upon a divine form ; and Church becomes, not our duty then, but our love. The hungry searching, the sadness that envelops so many souls, can be, is, assuaged and consoled in Church.

The touch of the Holy Spirit can truly make us all as one ; in Church our loneliness vanishes—we are joined there to other souls. Our separateness is blown away, dissolved ; the Spirit that makes the eternal communion of souls touches ourselves, and our hard limits are obliterated—we speak in some universal language, as the Apostles spoke at Pentecost.

But we may have to earn our place within this universal Church, pass through many obscure difficulties and pains. For our change is not superficial ; a great fundamental change is required, and the things that count so much have to cost. We cannot become Catholics for nothing, as my uncle used to say. The greatness and dignity we see has to enter and work in ourselves, and we owe to these great

things our fullest attention ; we have to give them the concern of our deepest life.

My uncle's decision was rock-like that I must make no change myself till the conviction of its necessity was overwhelming : nothing less was to count.

One does not make such a change for this or for that practical reason ; no criticism, nor comparison, nor even love should weigh here. It is the reality of God that calls to one, and there one must follow and go. And then, just as much as before, must we disregard difficulty and pain, arguments, reasons, imperfect vision : none of these weigh from another side. We must hold on to what we have seen ; it is the solid ground beneath our feet. Its solidity grows more and more real.

But till that moment comes we have to disregard our restlessness, ignore our irresolution, stay practising where we are, and try to give our best. In my own case I kept as he wished, concentrated on what I had, going regularly to Holy Communion, keeping to a very definite practice in reading and in prayer. He was very strict against all exaggeration and excessiveness as always limiting in the end ; and I went, at first, to Holy Communion only twice a week, and one Retreat a year. I loved these Holy Communions in the little quiet country churches where I lived, and the Retreats were a great happiness. I read much besides spiritual books to feed my mind, and for my emotion's rest. I must not spend long hours in

prayer, nor absorb myself in that, no matter how easy and uncosting it seemed to be. As my uncle never tried to convert people, never presumed to alter their souls' way, so he never wished to convert me, nor stimulate in any way my natural longing to become a member of his own Church. Yet what greater stimulation could I have humanly received than his sense of God? And to one who had ever found herself out of place in her own Church, what could be more convincing than the life he was witness to?

Yet, though longing to become part in what I felt so utterly real, it was long before I realised the actualness of his great Church's life and teaching. It was even long before I fully understood that all the great doctrines of God that I had learnt from him, were doctrines whose home and source were the Catholic Church.

The vision and massive wisdom of the Catholic Church calls strongly to the sense of God in oneself; it is so great a witness to the objective reality of God. For in this Church one escapes from the confusion that has all but lost the sense of God Himself. And there in His Church one met the Reality for which one so longed. And the utterly devoted lives, whose convictions shone so clear, were a stimulation and consolation beyond any words. Oh, what an inspiration is all this real otherness of life in a world where spiritual values count so little! And

how difficult it was to me to stay content where I was.

The Church idea is, as we know, different in many minds: it appeals to some as a great community, a beloved fellowship, of souls; and this reinforced and informed by the love and spirit of God and of Christ. For many years we may stay in this half-way house, perched, it seems, above a depth we may fear to plumb. A richer spiritual knowledge, a profounder depth, a fuller implication of the supernatural life are perhaps not meant for us; but for those who need the deeper tide, or who are filled by another, a different, sense of the immense reality of God, as of His nearness, the Catholic Church calls. The Catholic Church gives that soul far more than it can demand; it is, as it were, swallowed up in the Church's reality—loses itself in finding God.

The Real Presence of Christ, as my uncle said, was the centre, the true heart, of the Catholic Church: without the Real Presence of Christ in the Holy Eucharist, where would she be? What could a supernatural Church mean without this supernatural fact? There is her point, there is her nature and life, there her reality. "This has trained countless souls to sanctity": this "specific something" *is* the Catholic Church. The aggregate of souls, as the Baron would explain, do not constitute a supernatural life. The Church is filled by the Holy Ghost, who enters and envelops this body of souls, and joins them to Christ;

but a Church without this centre of life seems as a body, robbed of its heart.

The Spirit that informs Church is separate and apart from souls, yet lives in them: the Church would endure, were there but one soul left upon earth. This truth of Church that enters into us is yet apart from us: we *seem* to enter Church, but she really enters us; she enters us as Christ enters us. We cannot separate Christ and Church; and there are no words in which to depict the Bride of Christ. She is hidden within ourselves, as Christ was hidden in His tomb, and we might say of her, as St. Paul of Christ: "I, yet not I, but Christ in me." We are like empty tombs without this life within.

Yet this utterly real Church that seeks to sanctify all souls remains hidden from the world—often disdained, even hated and apparently unwanted, by the world. The wisdom that has known God remains often unrecognised; yet it is from her that we have gathered the great truths of God on which we all rest. We gather all she has given to us—of knowledge of God, of Christ, and of souls—but we refuse to acknowledge or admit its real source.

There are those who tell us that we do not require this touch of a supernatural life; they see a material limitation in so special a thing. The central unity through which each heart may beat in an eternal life is perhaps outside of their vision; the celestial harmony into which we may all join is not perhaps their centre

here. Yet the soul that is submerged in the heart of God recognises joyfully the true life of God; and as a child it knows and loves its home, the Catholic Church.

"Christ ever reincarnates Himself," my uncle used to say, speaking of this Church's life; and telling me one day of his Holy Communions, he said:

"I go up as though I were all bent down, drawn down; I am drawn down as though I were about to enter a tunnel; I am all crouched down to receive the Blessed Sacrament; and afterwards I feel expanded—I breathe deeply in a great deliverance."

So we breathe deeply in a great deliverance in the Catholic Church: we do not want a Church that is only a vast communion of souls; we want the mystical Presence of Christ, not denied but affirmed, in the Holy Eucharist; we want to receive of Church the life of God.

What richness this Church holds, even humanly! —a comprehensive richness to which no other body attains. She allies us with saints and mystics innumerable; she brings close up beside ourselves the age-long loves and hopes of centuries; we share through her in traditions that belong to the days of Christ. We can be Christians of the time of Nero, share in those persecutions, share in the joys and shames endured through centuries; we seem to live, through her, in touch with humanity itself.

And her eternal creativeness gives us ever fresh depths of life; fuller implications spring from her

spirit as the years pass. She stands motionless, but her stillness is only to disclose to us her illimitable horizons. She reveals to us more as we grow able to see. Often things that have seemed to have no special life for ourselves, suddenly emerge for us in an immensely rich significance, adding another source of inspiration to our lives.

The Holy Ghost brings us, then, through Church into a sense of the marvellous God, as of His eternal Word and infinite love. And this Church remains the limitless revelation of God; and our failures, even as St. Peter's, do not separate us from the life of God.

"What can we render to God for all He has rendered to us?"

And life in this Church is so entirely homely that we are utterly happy there; our shortest visit gives us an ease and peace. There we are in communion with children and poor: perhaps it was through the poor that I first saw, and loved, the beauty of the Catholic Church; it is through them, perhaps, that she makes her first appeal to us. For what is a Church that does not make a home for beggars, queer people, outcasts? We want to share with these; it was for these most of all, that Christ came; and perhaps we may be even as they. In the Catholic Church we see them as much at home as children are; they seem to feel no distinction of class or poverty, just as there is no distinction of age: the Catholic Church is the Church of children and poor. Young and old, rich and poor,

all are at home there, and that is the Church we desire. We all share in this divine light, as we all depend on each other's light—just as at Candlemas we see the rich man lighting his candle from his neighbour's, a poor child's.

It is this closeness of contact, this obliterating of all distinctions, that we so require; and the Catholic Church gives us this oneness of spirit, for she has the secret of Christ.

"There is a river whose waters wash the city of God." The Church is as this river, and it is a wonderful spectacle to see—to watch the stream of humanity that passes from dawn to eve in and out of a Catholic church. It is a supreme witness to the reality of a Church that cannot die, as it holds Christ.

XI

THE LIFE OF RELIGION

In giving me a nucleus of Church, and then gradually the full life of Church, my uncle never forgot history. The unhistorical religious woman, as the specifically learned woman, was his bane; he never omitted to give me the origin and place of each doctrine and practice, besides explaining the difference between discipline and faith. The elaborately careful discriminations that he made brought all his facts into relation with their centre, and in this way they entered into a real living life within oneself.

In thinking of his teachings, then, one is confronted with a mass of vivid life; and it seems an impossibility to define into separate parts this infinitely various vitality. The life of religion is so immense, that once we begin to regard it at all, we perceive that its horizons are indeed limitless, for the more we can see the more there is to be revealed. The actual life of religion can never be finally or completely said; even the fragments we collect are so elusive, and so deeply intertwined in all our surface life, that they present themselves to us in a vast mass and tangle; and it is impossible to isolate as separate facts this mixed, contrasted, opposite, paradoxical life—the life

that merges itself into all we do and are; the life that is also the source and instigation of our own.

The image that religion gradually impresses on our souls is made up of this continued life; a stream of essentialness, of secret sense and power, steals through all our actions, thoughts, visions and desires; and from this secret life they take their colour, by it they are made alive. Named or unnamed, recognised or denied, this life eternally works.

How impossible it is to explain to the average person what religion is! We are so constantly informed that religion is easy, that it is nothing to bother about: it inflames an ignorant temper to hear it spoken of as something which we have to try to understand, and endeavour to grasp. The prejudice of ignorance against all spiritual values is so intense that it becomes almost a positive thing; the scorn of the ignorant burns up our inarticulate words, as a scorching fire eats up dry grass. But this immense life, whose ramifications descend deeper than we can follow, and whose life stretches far beyond what we know, to the beginning of our human time, cannot be explained and laid bare in so many feelings or convictions, in so many words.

To find and understand something of religion itself, you must commence living religiously, for faith enlightens our ignorance in a marvellous way: wisdom follows after simplicity, giving us an understanding by which we live.

But there are in the religious life so many queer things, so many obvious failures and setbacks, that one is often constrained to wonder, to question the power of religion itself to achieve what it sets out to do. We have the people whose practice seems more than perfect; they follow every injunction of Church, every rule of prayer; their talk is dotted over with their saintly intentions and protestations of faith; yet their lives are without the spirit we seek, they are full of judgment and righteousness, and contain so little real love. And then there are the people whose faithful practice seems yet entirely unlighted by any sense of God; and these seem the most truly marvellous, for they follow a kind of rule, and a vocal routine, that to a different way seems utterly obdurate and hard. And their faithfulness in what seems a dull routine of prayer is followed by an equal faithfulness of life—and God accepts these: we see the evidence of this every day; it is almost startling in its commonplaceness.

Sometimes we ask ourselves then, Does God mind *how* people love Him? For again we see people whose faith in God is founded on their immense concern with morality; thus their religion is ethical, rather than inspirational. Yet all these varieties and differences fill in the full tide of religious life, and God must desire and bless them all.

And then there are those whose great souls seem alight and thirsting for God, who know how God

should be worshipped, whose spirits are completely turned away from any worldly occupation, who never seek for themselves. Yet they deny the reality of God, they require no religion, and declare it to be a subjective imagination: limiting, fettering, imprisoning—a sheer entanglement for our minds.

Of these last there seem some explanations, though of a kind they would strongly resent. For they seem as though they were cases of arrested development: a kind of blight has fallen over one-half of their being, a most blinding cloud has fallen, and their personal life is to some extent halved and limited in power: the expansion we long to see is curtailed. They become enclosed in prejudices, slaves to statements and unreal categories; their spirits suffer in darknesses. We wait for their deliverance.

My uncle spoke sadly and often of those people who make so little use of their religious opportunities, those people who are given the truth and do not seem to use it. These are those whose practice is stereotyped and rigid, and whose spirits are not liberated; they do not use what they receive. He spoke, too, of those to whom God "is a sort of chalk-pit"—something that we can utterly ignore. And he used to wonder whether the religious nature was a gift, as music is; and whether for some of us it has to remain a faithful practice in a semi-light. "God accepts them all, I suppose," he would say wistfully; though there were those whom he felt would never see God

—they remained too material, too obdurate; they refused the entry to any spiritual element; they would not look towards God, enclosing themselves in some kind of untransparency.

And there are the souls to whom God seems to send great spears of Himself; He chooses, and gives them a real vision of Himself; He fills souls with these spears. And for ever after they cannot rest or be silent, but are ever trying to express God in their lives, in their words. They want to say what they see, and cannot; they are His chosen people, for God does choose His people—and their souls are overwhelmed by Him, abandoned to His power and will.

My uncle tried to make as many things as possible clear and living to one; he tried to brace up our weakness, and to consolidate whatever we are able to see. How much we need to learn of that balance of Christianity, that marvellous twin life that feeds the body and spirit and encloses our whole self. We have to keep a kind of cool clearness, with a deeply, passionately felt faith. The reconstruction of our personality is made possible by the reality of what we are able to perceive. There is a merging of opposites —a complete doubleness, a union of small and great, of human and superhuman—in religion. The religious spirit dwells ever in the stream of our material life, and the transformation of our personality is done unseen; we lose the sense of ourselves the more we see of God. Towards the end, even our unworthiness

seems to matter so little. God, as St. John's Epistle says, is greater than our hearts.

One of the many of my uncle's tasks was the gathering together of our treasures, the connecting of so much wasted power, the turning of potentialness into creative life. The secret lightening, the wind of the Spirit, has to be recognised, even in a sort of way held, before its opportunity to achieve is born. My uncle's mind, occupied as it was with so much, yet found time to study the needs of each particular soul as he prayed for each, and endeavoured to give each what each required. He thus classified people into groups—he was naturally obliged to do so, there are such obvious similarities of souls; yet sometimes he would make the mistake of seeing them too exclusively as one of a certain type, and this cost him alarms that were unnecessary. He would be filled with perplexity and fear over some harmless action or interest that he was certain was the symptom of this or that. He would place upon one's character certain defects, or the reverse, that were not there; give one temptations that did not exist. I would often find him alarmed in this way over some person to whom the difficulties he foresaw would never occur; and I imagine this oversensitive alarm was due to a previous experience in a soul belonging to the same type.

I could give many examples of this, but it is unnecessary, for in the main he discerned so clearly the spiritual possibilities, the eventual elements, in each

soul. In my own case, I never told him of any of the things that had most moved me; never confided in him anything of my past life. I left everything dumb, everything unsaid; I knew I did not need to speak or to explain. For he understood what moved our souls, and the rest could be ignored.

And how consoling was this largeness of mind, lifting one away from the small concerns that fill so many souls! How sensitively aware he was of what we need! In his desire to help he gave one not only all that he saw, all that had helped him, but also he gave much that meant little to him if he discovered that it helped. He would thus try things on one, so to speak, quickly withdrawing what did not suit. The tradition and rich life of Catholic spirituality, the almost infinite variety one finds here, were the elements on which he fed one. The great Catholic saints and fellow souls made a great actual world into which I stepped. The channels through which that spiritual life flows are of an infinity; the radiations from the life of God penetrate and permeate through so great a variety in his Church that they become a solid world of fact to one.

The true relation between suffering and life, the beauty of renunciation and love, the marriage of the infinitely little and homely with the infinitely great and supernatural—these facts the Catholic Church illuminates for us, and gives us, through its spiritual vision, a wonderful hope.

No one soul will find exactly the same things helpful and stimulating that another does, and the varied religious life is the most substantial value of all to the soul. We all borrow from each other—no one ever stood completely alone and outside of the general soul; no one ever emerges in a completely new and different category. And as we belong to two worlds, there is always a tension—we are here and need the here, yet the *not* here matters most of all; we have to face somehow two ways at once. We start out of our spiritual life to encounter a most hard material life of means and facts, and yet our spiritual life is actually made fruitful and alive through the occupations of our material life.

To fulfil and complete the demands of the spirit is religion's task, but it goes far beyond this. For religion surely is to present to us a perfect living image of the life of Christ on earth; through it we are delivered from the despair we may feel at the mystery of pain, and the multiplicity and confusion of ourselves and of the world.

No single human mind can contain or explain religion's life: the life that unites discords; makes rough places smooth; shows us a crown, not of success, but of failure—and only the Christian religion does all this.

XII

MY UNCLE'S SPIRIT

WHAT can I possibly say of this immense rich world on the threshold of which we now stand? What is the fruit of the teaching, the message, that the Baron delivered with such immense power, and at so much cost?

Towards the end of his life I went with him and his old German maid to stay for a week at Thursley, and there we lived a most carefully ordered and regulated life: the mornings for our own reading, the afternoons and evenings for reading aloud, walks, and talk. I noticed here how tired he was, how much less vigorous; he was very much saddened and occupied by Troeltsch's death, which brought him also a lot of extra work, taking him away from the cherished book he wanted so much to finish on "The Reality of God."

And here he seemed to me rather more recollecting than creating. He gave one the impression that he was gathering together his most final discriminations, the things that were fundamentally intertwined in his own life; he disentangled for one his own objective, separating the gold from the dross.

In this retrospection he brought forward the many

constituents of religion, especially those that had been of the most enormous service to him himself. My uncle never hesitated to relate his own experience: he never left out himself, but spoke with a warm and natural sincerity of his own experience and life.

He had never spoken much to me of the special sacramental life of his own Church: he had rather concentrated more on what we could share in common, hesitating, I suppose, before possibly upsetting me even more than I already was. But here at Thursley he spoke almost exclusively and specially of the Catholic Church, and of what he himself owed to her—"simply everything"—and of that unique life that dwelt in her.

Here it was that, sitting one evening on a heap of wood outside of a farmhouse, he spoke quite definitely of that special life:

"I do not think that I myself would go often into a Church where there was no Real Presence of Christ. I suppose it was about 600 years before the Real Presence had a definite worship, and this visiting of the Blessed Sacrament was never instituted by Rome—it simply grew. You see how wise Rome is! Before this the Real Presence had only been worshipped at Holy Communion, but by degrees the special Presence of Christ would call out this special devotion and special services. This development was an inevitable happening, and one that has trained many saints. I myself should feel quite differently

about a Church without that Presence—and after I have visited it I know that I always gain a greater peace and effective affection than I otherwise can have."

He spoke, too, of the human imperfections of his own Church, and what they had cost him, the mistakes and limitations that on the human side all things here must contain. But he was always returning to gaze, as it were, on that mysterious something, on that unique life that he declared no other Church possessed. He told me that afternoon, too, of her marvellous power to produce and train the greatest in mind and soul. The balance and wisdom of Rome was often on his lips—her supernatural life that so entered and coloured the natural world, giving a proper place to the things that matter, and showing one the things to ignore. My uncle's own love covered so much and extended so far. He loved the great deep things; yet also, and as well, he loved the symbols that shrined for him, as for all Catholics, touching and lovely presences.

I noticed here, too, how much he really loved natural beauty, for it had often seemed to me that he had somehow a lack in this one particular perception.

But here I observed that though natural beauty did not make the *first* appeal to him, nor was his spirit *of* it as my father's seemed, yet he certainly observed and loved it greatly. It may have been that

his reserve about all visible beauty was an intentional thing, a limitation that he had trained himself into, in a desire to move away from it along a different road. He seemed to fear any very marked love of beauty, and did not regard its marvellous appeal as a special testimony to God. All human beings have some limitation, and we are continually drawn to regard the perfection of God through our perception of this fact. We cannot idolise man when we observe the obvious fact that no man is ever completely *all*: God alone is all. And this lack (if it is one) went through all his being; sheer beauty always left him cold: he needed the beauty of mind; he rejoiced at and regarded the beauty of souls. "We will not idolise form, it is the content that matters," is a very characteristic remark of his. Thus he could love a Browning, but not the divine music in a Shelley or Keats.

He needed the kernel of a rich content, not an elusive beauty that almost escapes as we pursue—he seemed even afraid of the tokens of the presence of that beauty. Yet visible beauty is to some people the surest and nearest approach to God. God appears to them there, almost visibly hushing their souls; and I think my uncle made a mistake in confusing these with those people who pursue beauty alone in a kind of preciousness and fastidiousness, who make beauty their centre without any regard to life. The pursuit of beauty as an end by itself, does produce a curious effect on the soul: there is a certain coldness, an

abstract limited love that will not tolerate any ugliness, nor even any ordinariness. An absorbed love of beauty alone seeks perfection outside of the human world of facts, and takes us far from the suffering love that is our final resting-place.

The perception of beauty seems a divine gift, but not to be used alone; for when it is isolated, it leads to a drawn-in rather than an expanded life. The *closest* connexion with all things is what we must seek; the realest love grows the most beautiful flowers in the burning fire of a mixed life. This is what my uncle saw, and held as most central (one of his favourite words); and in his occupation and absorption in the interior beauties of souls he perhaps forgot those other kinds of perceptions that need different stimulations, are born to be themselves through the operations of visible beauty, to see in sheer beauty the irradiation of God. Different souls we know are moved by different things; and we do not *have* to remain cold because our way to God may lie in a visible world. The world of nature filled my father with joy; and this inspiration in him was not an isolated fact, but joined him into a world of singularly generous warmth and love. Yet beauty was his soul's basis, his very life. He did not only recognise and pursue it, but seemed touched by its mysterious being, quickened by beauty itself; his soul lived and expanded in this sun of his love.

We see that artists are like mystics, or rather, per-

haps, mystics *are*, in the first place, artists; for they both are provided with a power of identity with what they love. Mystics and artists are born and not made, and they are both completely natural; the exaggerated notions of mystics that sometimes prevail seem fantastic and ridiculous. To the mystic there is no other way but his own; to speak and feel and think as he does is in the nature of his being; he does not have to learn all the different "ways" of which we hear so much. They are given him, as the natural development of his nature. Any other way seems to him too terribly difficult, hard, and obscure, while his way is easy, all is given, he has but to accept.

This all seems so clear! My uncle never spoke specially to me of the mystical way, never gave me any mystical books—he left that side of religion in one to go its own natural way: he fostered the Church and intellectual side as far more necessary for me. But though we see in him very clearly the touch of the mystical being, yet he is not so peculiarly mystical as immensely rich; he contrives to contain within himself, to an almost unique degree, a fragment of all the three elements that man's religious nature requires for its fullest growth. He is active, intellectual, *and* mystical—neither of the three alone; so he spoke of all three in conjunction, and did not dwell only on one.

We see how artists are impatient of institutional things, feel a reluctance to give up their own spirits'

intuitions and freedom to any general knowledge or sense; yet their mystical souls would gain, could they be completed in the trinity my uncle achieved. We see the loss of this special appeal of beauty more than compensated, in my uncle, by this marvellous accommodation within one individual soul, of the three separate elements necessary to our religious lives. He was a living example of his own discrimination with regard to the need for Church religion, and for the need in ourselves, of an active, intellectual, and mystical life.

The realities that make some souls flutter and tremble were all, then, for my uncle, in the life of the soul; for my father they were touched into active being by the sublime that he saw or heard. To him beauty was the greatest of all realities; as an artist, the loveliness of seeing and hearing dissolved his soul. But to both it was beauty that drew, though in my uncle we recognise another sort of beauty—a beauty that finds its true home and inspiration in the faith that he held.

My uncle commended so many things. He had such a capacity to perceive and divine the truth that the few things he did not encourage or tolerate stand out very clear. I cannot remember anything that really seemed to disturb him, except Mrs. Besant and Theosophy, and Christian Science! These were his *bêtes noires*. They were things we were not to touch or to meddle with—queer sideshows, uncentral things

whose power for harm seemed to him almost infinite.

He was so truly Catholic, so constantly aware of and reminding one of the value of the different elements of truth in the various religions of the world —Judaism and Buddhism, etc.—that these exceptions stand out particularly clear. These great religions he anxiously commended to one, and yet he most constantly asked me to "get very clear" that all these religions were never on the same level, never interchangeable. "Christianity stands alone here—Christ recreates."

The immense and illimitable life of the Spirit finds material everywhere to touch with the touch of truth; and in this same secret way the Spirit touches us individually in an appeal that is as varied as infinite. To one music is the food of love, to another beauty of soul; to all comes suffering, not as an end in itself, but always as a means to reach that crown of joy—the vision of Christ and God.

We hunger for suffering because we have realised that it is our way to see God, and our unconscious striving for an ever closer union with His divinity is our incentive to suffer. We see, too, that the life of religion is so real because it is so costing, so costing because it is so real. And suffering is our purification and food, the food we need to arrive at the perception and fulfilment of our truest personal life.

XIII

THE SOUL'S DESIRE

When the Soul becomes conscious of the nearness of God a kind of hunger and thirst seizes her for one thing alone. Her desires are all centred on a oneness that makes her believe that she can only find God and Christ in their reality by dropping and forgetting everything else. That seems to her to be the singleness that God calls for, the singleness of eye, of which Christ speaks. Yet this wonderful clearness of vision is not a final revelation, the succeeding time shows that such singleness is not to be literally sought or found here below; we have to keep a singleness of eye and of spirit, but through a multitude of activities and things. We really have to follow quite a different programme in order to reach our objective. We need a singleness of sight, but to inform a multiplicity of action, because the life that is denuded of all thought or active contacts becomes thin and dies away; and such a literal and excessive concentration would but result in an emotional emptiness and strain.

Our active life, then, is built upon our prayer life, yet our prayer life needs our activity. We need to live as though each act were that instant's life, and to pray with the same reality. These two things melt

each into each, and the prayer life consistently exists both in itself and in occupation with an immense activity.

The soul that is deeply conscious of Christ's life desires to *feel* alone with him; she is at bottom, I expect, always *united* to him, but she desires to feel it, and anything that impedes this feeling is distasteful to her. Yet the soul must ever turn to varied things, encounter and resolve many differences, and this accommodation of the spiritual to the material world is the very tension that our spiritual lives require; the soul must be drawn tight, as the string is drawn, to sound a clear note. And the truest singleness of spirit is one of which we are not aware, for the acts within a truly recollected soul are so variously many, so lightning quick, that she is not conscious of them within herself.

We cannot compare the busy activities, the scattered distracted lives of many that we see, with those whose lives are unified and controlled in a true relation to their centre. The sense that we are doing but one thing at a time, as St. Teresa said, is an enormous strength and peace, and in this purpose we can achieve an immensely active life that yet remains in a real tranquillity. How far more we can do when we have recognised and are aware of that Power which unites our various weaknesses and activities in strength, as parts are united and strengthened in a chord!

We see so much of activity, so much of disorganised and wasteful lives, that we begin to dislike and distrust all such activity, and long to be still, empty, and silent in contrast. Yet really we should aim at the greatest mixedness of life of which we are capable; for our capacity of making contacts, of encountering and embracing different aspects, is the measure of our capacity to become real: yet all this must be achieved without distraction, our surface doings must not disturb an inner tranquillity, and this interior peace is a "givenness"—it grows within us totally unperceived.

The life that touches an unseen world is not disturbed by the happenings of here; and our vague personality is lit and co-ordinated by another Personality—the unattached elements in ourselves can be united in a real life. Yet this recollected life never despises natural things, nor does it require of us a kind of eternal concentration and intensity; on the contrary, we must practise that elasticity, that balance of small and great, deep and light, of which we hear.

We need to relax, to rest, to enjoy the purely surface things, find happiness in our homely life of every day. How barren else do we become! How critical and separate! We are not able in our human state to live apart; we must condescend (if condescending it is) to the average and ordinary, share in the trivial things, if trivial they be.

Our Lord, we see, made His life most of all in those simple natural things, in the pleasures and doings of the poor; His life was spent in their lives, occupied in an endless variety of these.

There seems to be a consciousness within us of which we are only slowly aware; it gradually pushes its way through our material heaviness, resolving our discordancies, illuminating our difficulties. And as we apply our minds to spiritual values, this consciousness comes ever nearer to the surface of our minds, till at last perhaps its life will emerge so completely that it will make a complete accord between our exterior and our interior life, so that we shall live in that perfect liberty we so desire.

This ever-growing transparency can sometimes so invade the natural world that everyone who walks here seems but the shadow of some inner and immense Reality that seems to burst its bonds before our very eyes. Before long we begin to wonder whether all the earth will melt in this transparency, and instead of dull streets, tall houses, and narrow ways we shall ever see the radiant spaces of eternity: the visible world fades, and we forget that we ever regarded it as a reality.

Religion is a never-ending revelation of this other world that is no phantasy: religion never begins nor ends, but is in an immense continuity, embellishing all we see and do and hear.

It seems to start in an awareness of a true Per-

fection, in an emotional perception of something utterly different from ourselves. We recognise God in the yearning of man's soul; in misery and in joy; in the desire for something the soul feels to be there as the source and hope of that different life within herself to which she can give no name.

Religion is as a sort of magical glass through which we look, and each looking shows us something new; and the revelation astounds, incites, and consoles. The Incarnation of the Word of God brought the immense Reality of God close into the lives of men; and the enigmatical God that men worshipped was translated into the God of Christianity whom men adore.

And the inexplicable God inevitably demanded goodness of us; for if religion is not actually morality, yet the vision of God discloses in some measure to man's soul the Perfection that God is; and the worship of God brings us to our greatest desire—to be somehow like God, near to His truth and beauty, near in some measure to His love. O vast hope! O illimitable endeavour!

As a two-edged sword, then, religion enters our life; at first as an immense consolation, translating all our sufferings into joy. Yet we only attain this immense consolation, this different vision, through real suffering: we enter this other country through a real abandonment of ourselves to the will of God. There is joy in the desire for God only, as a kind of joy in all giving, in all sacrifice. And this joy speaks in a

divine tongue, and seeks not success as its Crown, but a Cross.

The endurances and heroisms, pathetic little efforts of the spirit of man, are all tokens of God's vast reality: the power of spirit to move spirit, the unsoundable influence of good, the eternal achievement of failure, the suffering that endures for and liberates the wicked—what are all these strange realities without God? We live on faith, for here we can never see the real actualness of the Presence of God, but we recognise Him in our spirit, and accept His inspiration as our centre, our hope.

Sometimes religion, churches, prayer, all seem utterly fantastic—so unreal as to be almost grotesque. Our material life will not envisage or embrace realities that it cannot actually touch or see. What should kneeling in worship mean for us or for God? And why should buildings called churches have any relation to God? We are dizzy and feel as though we stood above an immense empty space, our religious thoughts are nonsense, and we are unable to escape from this sense of unreality. In days like these the specially renounced life of the religious, as monks and nuns, appal us in their pitifulness, pierce our hearts with a sense of their futility. Yet God always comes back, as my uncle said—our belief in God is stronger than our hearts! Our belief in God may have started its conscious life through fear of the unknown, through the desire to propitiate; our progenitors may

have worshipped mountains, bogies, sticks or stones—or men invented God as a compensation, a redress for all the wrongs and sufferings we see here. We are continually told that these are the reasons why God was "invented," and yet they do not seem very relevant or real. They are more connected with the nature of man, with the development of his conception of God, and his relation to God, than with the Reality of God in Himself.

If God *is*, His Reality is not concerned in our faulty definitions of Him, nor is it affected by our strange ways of finding Him. Man's original state could hardly furnish a true perception of the Being of God, for the commencement of things is always small, and man may have sought Him for this or for that, dimly apprehending Him as the source of his desire. Yet he *sought* God, and this seeking seems to be the embryo of our own faith, whatever its birth: religion hides its full being in this seed.

We all *seek* God, within and without, and God has never left us without some sense and witness of Himself; He provides us even with the reasons for which to seek Him.

And that man should have a perception of God, even in his most barbarous state, seems a most marvellous witness to God's Reality. We cannot dismiss religion because man covers its beginnings with queer things: we do not dismiss man because he may have begun ape.

Man's original aspiration towards God was necessarily crude; for man could only recognise God in a form he could understand. His worship then began in idolatry, in strange doings, and in stranger beliefs: all this seems inevitable, unavoidable, even suitable.

And man's existence seems to depend on the existence of God; without God man becomes but a shadowy thing; withdraw God and we have man without the centre that unites, irradiates and gives meaning to his life.

In a strange yearning for another sort of life, in a perception of something different, in a desire for the Source, man has sought for God, or, as some say, created God. Yet God is far too big, too other, too different, for man to invent.

And as man develops, his religious sense grows from low to high, from dim to bright; and as in any other science, with his knowledge, his perception deepens and expands. He proceeds from a propitiatory fear, to worship and awe: and from these he discovers the Spirit of God, His Love; and from here it is but a step to the knowledge we now have—of God's mind, God's spirit, and God's love. The knowledge of the God who in Jesus Christ incarnates love in the world reaches us last.

Thus God, whose marvellousness no words can describe, fits Himself into our world; and God in our daily lives becomes the Word of His Eternity.

And if we think of the world without God our

spirits faint, we are in an anguish. In a deep revolt our minds declare that they cannot deny what is so real, nor endure in such an imprisonment.

In a realised abandonment of any belief in God we are confronted by man with no hope of release—man confined in his own personality, man chained into this concrete world.

For our ultimate belief in perfection, our ultimate hope to know wisdom and truth, rests *in* God: God alone sets us free from our limiting selves; God alone gives us our perfect liberty.

XIV

PRACTICAL CHRISTIANITY

"Today, if ye will hear His voice, harden not your hearts."

WHENEVER my uncle was asked for help and advice I noticed there was one thing he always said: "Could you manage to visit the poor?"—as though visiting the poor contained some magical virtue that would obliterate the faults, and solve the difficulties of every soul. In my own life I had long ago discovered a mysterious happening that followed our contact with the poor, so I noticed with particular interest this practical advice that he always gave.

What is it, then, about the poor that makes them so different? What is it they give to us? How is it that we long so much to be like them? How do they bring us up against things that somehow increase our small store of love?

We do not envy rich people; we do not feel touched by any special happiness in being with them. I cannot imagine wanting to be as they, nor wanting anything they have. Yet I cannot be with poor people without envying their kind of nature, without longing to share in exactly what they have and what they are.

This is a most strange mystery, for the poor are

certainly not angels—they tell stories and prevaricate, they are even suspicious and imagine things of which we would not think.

They are limited, too, by circumstance and by necessity; they do not care for music nor for beauty; we cannot talk to them of Shakespeare or Keats, nor could they understand Browning or Bach. All this side of our life is necessarily closed to them; and yet there is something in poor people that we have not got, some strange power that acts like a tonic, shaking us out of our unreality: their heroic endurance of endless work, their patience in utter discomfort, their true kindness of heart, awakens in us a spirit that is dissatisfied with ourselves, ashamed of how little we give.

Rich people are very unfortunate, for we read of them from the beginning as being left out and sent empty away. And for rich women it is especially difficult to become real persons, to be in the least real. A rich woman nowadays has no particular point in life, as she has no organic place to fill; nothing really needs her, for her children are taken care of by nurses, governesses, and schools; and her house is managed for her by servants.

There is nothing for her to do that *must* be done, so she has to invent occupations, find things to do; and this unfortunate state of affairs often leaves her in a kind of mental and spiritual paralysis. There are no efforts that must awaken her, no needs that drag her out of herself, to force her up against real life.

To sit on committees, to become intellectual, how

unreal this is ! How little real knowledge it gives ! Even to become a Member of Parliament does not necessarily and truly acquaint one with the facts of life—one has to be something oneself, some objective necessary thing has to be done, no matter how small, before we are incorporated in any significant life.

Some women make a hobby out of religion, but this works more disaster than anything; for a kind of impenetrable veil falls over the mind and soul that seeks religious things merely as an occupation, or a kind of distraction—no reality lies there.

Christ came for the poor: He lived with the poor: He was one of the poor; and in spite of the many warmly devoted and generous rich, the poor with all their disadvantages leave them behind every time.

The rich were sent empty away; so we are always up against this paradox. When I was a child these words troubled me; for I saw the poor, as they are—lacking everything, cumbered in cares; living perpetually in such insecurity that the smallest disaster contains tragedy for them. How could we then say, I would ask, " He filleth the poor with good things " ? Yet it is the poor who really possess all things, and the rich who really remain empty: for they are limited, curtailed and dependent: they have no possibility of even imagining the realness that visits the homes of the poor. They cannot visualise poverty, want, hunger and cold, nor inevitable weariness that yet must rise to labour, toiling selflessly in the midst of noise and crowd.

How should they imagine lives so different in the midst of their own so desperate unreality? They are as ignorant of necessity (and often they are desirous of remaining so) as was the unfortunate Marie Antoinette.

The poor suffer in lack of material comfort, in lack of opportunity, in all essential things; yet these so painful limitations seem compensated for by their unequalled simplicity, by their unimaginable generosity.

How we do forget, or ignore, the fact that it is the poor who make life possible for us! Their continued labour achieves our ease; their common spirit is the ground and basis on which we depend. And we ignore this great and enduring givingness; we take from them all they can give, stand on the foundation they make; yet think ourselves somehow so superior that we rightly, and inevitably, demand their sacrifice.

The poor are singular beings, so heroic and so dumb: everything depends on them, but they stay hidden, heroically patient, and unaware of how great they are. They quietly accept the life we require them to live, while we achieve our lives through them.

So in their realness we yearn to be as they, we long to share somehow in what they are; and in their religion, too, we find this same unique kind of reality. They are linked so tightly to what costs, that they cannot wander away on devious paths; the doors are shut to the ways of idleness, they have no time for thoughts of self or fantasy.

Their limitations are as the pruning of fruit trees,

for they shoot out in fruit so much more precious than material possessions; they are covered in a myriad golden buds.

As Dickens's Scrooge, we can be softened by their natural happiness, their unselfish love; and yet we harden our hearts against their sufferings, we speak of them as though they were some different kind of people, some inferior sort of being that is incapable of real sorrow. We really seem to believe that we have some inherent superiority that makes it necessary that we should be kept comfortable at all costs, while what they bear is right and suitable for them.

How terrible it would be if we had to give to the unknown poor, anything that might cost much to ourselves!

And with the poor we see the people who are obviously faulty, whose sins are as scarlet, yet without malice, and against these we close our hearts too. The cultivated superior person, who has no room for the poor, has no room either for these; yet if we attempt to discriminate and to judge people, how futile it seems! I am sure the blunders that we make here will exceed any; and we shall find the strangest people in Paradise, if ever we get there. God alone knows the special difficulties, the temptations, of each nature; the loss of opportunity, the confining conditions in which we may have to live. And God alone sees the little touches of sanctity that hide in each soul, impossible for us to recognise.

So the simple sinner, whose humble life is not

illuminated by any wisdom, nor by prudence, nor by strength, is overwhelmed, perhaps, in the blunders he so obviously makes. Yet in reality he may possess a certain touching generosity of love, that anchors him to his Saviour, and far outweighs the pious correctness of the Pharisee.

The world condones many terrible things: evil-speaking, selfishness, even cruelty and pride, unkindness and worldliness—what more horrible sins than these?

Yet these receive no stigma; we all, not only accept them, but partake quite happily in them. But an obvious moral weakness, an open fault, these—especially in the poor and defenceless—are unforgiveable.

Yet defenceless people seem always nearest to our Lord, and the comfortable Pharisee, who severs all relations with those who need care and love, may some day find that he has severed all relations with Christ.

Where did we learn this superiority? Where did we conceive Christianity as a spirit that detests suffering, ignores the lost sheep, and speaks (but not in the spirit of the Gospels) with horror of the "alien world"?

Righteousness is always horrible anywhere, whether in rich or poor, and respectability seems to have become England's God. Yet Christ was never respectable. He lived with those we do not want to know or even to see; they are His friends, we do not cut them with impunity. And we ourselves share in all sins, we are all "fallen": who shudders so at sin should shudder at himself.

The strangest things are done in the name of Christ! There are actually Societies, run by the kindest good people, that will not receive in their midst any but the righteous. How can we know who the righteous are? or how can we believe that Christ came only for these? There is something pathetic and something terrible in these things; and the price we pay for so much hypocrisy is just humbug, and a conscious hardening of our hearts, a superior insensitiveness to real sufferings. The idea of protecting others from contact with sin, in a world where everyone is bound close to his fellow, and where we are called on to suffer for and with each fellow soul, seems utterly fatuous, almost painfully ignorant.

We cannot hide or deny facts; nor shall we make one real step forward till we have begun to have courage to embrace the realities of life.

We build ourselves shelters, or we hate to see pain; we are afraid, and we hide and dig ourselves in—when our only chance of salvation is to live in contact with everything, in a love that will contain all.

I remember some years ago a good kind clergyman telling me I should not welcome obvious sinners to my house—"people who drink too much, or things like that; it lowers the tone." Lowers the tone! Would Christ, then, lower the tone? Yet what did He tell us? One wonders, if our Lord were here now, could He be known? Many people must wonder about these things; we live in such fantastically

false worlds, invent such absurd rules, that some people want to run away to some other world, where reality is recognised and accepted, where humanity, just as it is, is known and loved. One grows bitter towards respectability: it seems sometimes almost the worst of sins, or it is a bastard kind of goodness; and it is neither rich nor poor that offend particularly, but those people who close their hearts.

And when we come to think about the coloured races, there is a sudden stop in our thoughts. For here we are afraid to face reality, afraid to regard the reality of ourselves; here our Christianity seems to cease functioning, here we become worse than any beasts; here the terrible evil that is hidden right in the heart of human nature springs out; here our minds and hearts and reason shake, in a horror of ourselves that outstrips words.

What covering can our shame receive?

For the coloured people are as our living sacrifice—they suffer perhaps for our sins. From the beginning we see them thus enclosed in a meek suffering that lifts not its voice. They have no redress, but go daily as a lamb to the slaughter, opening not their mouth. *They* are the chosen, who suffer helplessly, giving their lives that we may live.

Good Christians spit and mock at them, and they are numbered with the transgressors in their death. Our salvation seems to depend on the sacrifice of others: perhaps we shall be healed by their stripes.

XV

TODAY

As into our prayer of waiting the spirit may enter and fill our words with life, so in the spiritual life we see that after a long training our spiritual waiting is crowned, too, by another life—a life that betrays itself in an ordered freedom, a liberty that we can clearly trace.

There is something utterly different about the truly spiritual person, whose divisions have been healed up, and who is no longer weighed down or distracted by the things of the world. Everything with such persons has fallen into its proper place—not for little bits of time, as in ourselves, but always and continuously they seem drawn closer and closer into the life of God; and the life of God obliterates for them all the unreal things of the world.

How we do envy them this liberty! How we do wonder when and how they reached this close correspondence with what they most love; how they learnt to stay always so near their centre, Who is God.

Is it their prayer that has bound them up so tightly into the mind of Christ that they cannot fall away? Has it entered into all their being, filling them with some kind of sap that feeds them, as manna in

the desert, from a different source, with the food of Christ?

How we do yearn to know their secret, follow their paths, gain the vision that sees so faithfully what to ourselves is dim and far away! Their relation to their centre is totally different from our own; it is of a different quality, and in a different degree. We cannot name what it is, yet we see it separating us by circles and circles of a vital difference. They live in another world to this—a world so full of beauty, of faith, of joy and love, that they are almost entered into the kingdom of God. Yet we, too, can gain this spiritual life, this blessing that is given or gained; yet never for gain must we love God, only for Himself. We must love Him for His glory alone, seek to endure all for His glory, endeavour to remain in contact with His glory, only for His glory. That is what we desire and seek.

The faithfulness that accepts all happiness and suffering, as in the will of God; that does not grumble at the trivial things of life, but accepts all these that crowd in upon us as we might accept great events: all this abandonment to the will of God brings us to the saints, it is the way they tread. How simple it seems! So we shall be formed by the strength that is made perfect in weakness, conformed into the liberty of the sons of God.

For the truth waits for us to respond, and waits always, endures to the last: praying in us and for

us, reaching us through the lives and prayers of other souls. We are never really alone, however alone we may seem to be. I clasp this thought ever closer and closer; for it is often our seeming solitariness that daunts us most and destroys our hope. And as we go about the world we are given continually the most precious things—kindnesses quite unsought, beauties that move our souls. We see so much humble goodness, so much sweet faith, such utterly unself-occupied lives; we owe so much to these truly lovely lives that are all about us; we are moved to acts we could never otherwise achieve, by just these natural acts and things that we see.

Yet these natural lovelinesses, these simple goodnesses, are claimed by God; the God of nature prompts and owns them; and the enlightenment that streams from them comes from the God of Grace.

And the lessons we learn spiritually are totally different from our natural lessons. Cleverness we see does not count in our spiritual lives; we do not have to know more than we do, nor discover answers to things that we do not understand. In our spiritual lessons we do not have to learn by heart dull words that escape from us directly we turn our backs; nor are we frightened by our stupidity, nor silenced by our dullness; cleverness is even a hindrance, so different are the knowings required of the soul.

Patience, simplicity, faithfulness; a sincerity that is resigned in quietness; a singleness of heart that

truly requires but one thing—these are the things we have to learn about, to gain, and to become. And these things I learn to recognise are the most difficult things for women to achieve; for a sense of moderation, a natural wisdom and balance, seem the things that most of all they naturally lack. How often we are irritated by that singularly unattractive thing, "a religious woman," as often as we are chilled by the learned! For my uncle's words against the unhistorical-minded religious woman, and his horror of the learned blue-stocking, were founded on his own experience of them. When we are ignorantly religious we may become a mass of fads, a prey to any kind of foolish belief; and when we are learned we seem to lose largeness of heart and the power of love. In this difficulty, then, what are we do do? Is it impossible for a woman to have both head and heart? I do not think so. Yet if women in the average are incapable of both, then let us have the women of heart every time.

The learned woman seems a kind of monster sometimes, a betrayal of her sex, for she has lost her essential quality, her unique preciousness; she is no longer woman, yet she is not man; and the more intellectual she becomes the more prone we find her to a curious and unattractive emotionalism that is not heart, but very far from it.

The necessity, then, for a *conscious* practice of a balanced life is more obvious for women than for

men; women have to steer between two dangers—that of being too learned or too ignorant! Their way does not seem easy, and their practice of life, as of prayer, should all be contained in that one word—moderation; for moderateness is what by nature they most lack.

Unfortunately, it is always the excessive woman who is most in the public eye; there is little danger of the moderate and quiet person being seen. So in religion we always have pressed into our notice those women who are ever giving unasked-for advice, or those whose religion really seems to begin and end in the services of a particular Church, or the ministrations of a particular Priest.

Or, again, there are those who are so over-zealous in their Church practice that in their daily lives they seem to forget what Church means, what it is for.

These women repel one, and their ways disgust those who do not know what true religion is, and, unfortunately, these confuse them with religion itself. Therefore we are continually told that religion drives women mad; that they are simply mistaking their obsessions; and this cloudy emotionalism, this windy excess, the semi-physical devotion of some women, all lend themselves to a horrible misinterpretation of religion itself.

These women do not edify, and one cannot but resent the harm that they do. Yet it must be remembered that their limitations and aberrations are hardly

their own fault: their excessiveness is the result, not of malice, but of ignorance; and we must not be put off religion because women are so strange.

It is a sad fact that, with rare exceptions, women are born without the sense of restraint, without that rock-like centre of conviction that we find in men. The average woman simply does not possess a perception of abstract truth, nor a fundamental sense of suitability. We have to admit that we never know where women will be off to—in act, word, or thought; nor what fantastic thing will next claim their faith.

Men keep an interior knowledge of what is essential and significant; they possess a basic sense of values that women lack. They combine a deep sincerity with an elasticity that provides them with the power to grasp and discern what matters, what counts.

I suppose it is this almost objective difference between women and men that has called forth the words, "He for God only, she for God in him"; for these words apply to the average woman very clearly. But though woman as a creative being is less than man, yet her heart and mind *can* compare with the best; and she is ever known for the singleness of her devotion, the purity of her love: these things have always been most specially hers.

Every day we recognise the faithful love, the unselfishness of women, their uncomplaining acceptance of humble tasks and uninspiring trials. But with

these qualities they have to gain a power that they lack: a power to produce something solid in themselves, a power to discriminate, a power to discern their difficult way between ignorance and learning, devotion and exaggeration, emotion and pure love—Scylla and Charybdis.

And we all need the grace that resolves our discords, makes smooth and obliterates our stony places, moderates our intensities, and covers with large wings our restless preoccupation with things, and with ourselves. The fruits of the spirit are love, meekness and peace, long-suffering and humility; and these gifts are surely everyone's, yet they seem even specially the characteristic gifts, the natural property, of women.

Today, in any general recollection of one's life, as in any personal remembrance of any individual, one forgets so much that has been essential to the construction of the whole, that one is often suddenly dismayed in observing the enormous hiatus and lacuna to which something draws one's attention, and one feels a kind of despairing consciousness that not only the connecting thread, but the real root that has given the ultimate meaning and determination of the whole, has been left unsaid.

There is a kind of easy taking for granted, an inattention to anything that is not on the surface; or one may be too conscious of the wood to observe the separate trees. The immense fact of an individual

obscures the many facts of his personality, and it is only too easy to ignore or to forget what counts most in the individual's very being. Even in our own lives we forget the most vital occasions, the deepest experiences : what gave birth to our strongest convictions can almost wholly pass out of our own minds.

Today, then, I can completely forget or miss out, perhaps, the very kernel, the determining factor in both my uncle's and my father's lives. I may not even have discovered what it was, or I may have so firm a knowledge of the whole, that I cannot trace the particular nor express the source of what I see. One may have, too, so keen a sense of the presence of this or that characteristic or conviction, that one imagines them as generally recognised, accepted and understood.

One falls into all these dangers about both persons and things. It takes a Baron von Hügel to set forth at all adequately the origin, meaning, setting and implication of any one person or thing, in so far as it can be done at all. And the whole of any one person can never be said ; we express only the knowledge we have of the obvious characteristics, the recognition of the separate gifts that one sees—as one sees the leaves and branches of some great tree whose life is fed from mysterious sources deep down within the earth.

I am so constantly aware when thinking of my father and my uncle of the way they escape from

my handling—how much I have to leave out through my own ignorance, and how much can never be set down of personalities so great. I grasp them both as witnesses to the reality of spirit. I feel my father's sincerity, his ardent determined soul touched by this reality that he never ignored; and I see my uncle as the fullest, deepest expression of that essential spirit that has identified itself with the huge witness of Church. Both give one so much, so far more than one can trace; from both angles of vision we gain a contact with this reality of spirit which moves us as nothing else can.

Today, in going over old letters, I am astonished at how entirely uneducated one can remain, even while to a certain degree thoughtful, observant and critical; and even with the experience and knowledge of the value of suffering in gaining and widening love.

These things penetrate our minds slowly, and, as with any other knowledge, they gain power as they are known.

The reluctances and sorrows in our lives may have been healed and transformed by particular griefs—the limitations of our love enlarged by the recognition of the love in other souls. But for these to be most effective, we must take note and observe; for these facts that our minds have stored can lie dormant and unrecognised: it may be long before we actually see their actual shape. But when once we begin to perceive, we recognise that what is illuminated within never fades; and

the power of such enlightenments grows steadily, till the first faint irradiation finally illuminates all, in a luminousness of its own, impossible to ignore. As we grow older this fact becomes more and more clear to us, its reality almost astounds us : our little islands of light turn into vast flooded continents : the commencing light gradually permeates all, as the sun's glow steals over the world at dawn.

How much we change ! How much we owe to other souls ! In any survey of past years we are brought up against the different personalities that we have known and loved, and who, consciously or not, have stimulated and aided us in so many ways. Individuals in very different walks of life, poor or rich, of any kind of religion—Anglican, Catholic, Quaker, Jew ; or Agnostic — all have contributed their light to our small light, consolidated our floating state, filled up the empty places in our essential of life.

These companies of people have given to us so much more than we can possibly recall or express, in their wisdom and patience and goodness of life.

In the many ways in which one has listened and observed one learns a certain toleration, a certain perception, one explores into many minds who seem to find strange things helpful, and one observes to what different forms of belief they anchor their lives.

These to oneself seem sometimes furthest from the

truth. Yet these beliefs carry power to sustain, as all affirmations do; and through contact with many varied lives one learns to gather some truths from all. My uncle's toleration, that was never indifference, could embrace so much, yet not, one observes, if his central truth was denied. There we feel him rising up, as in his ire against Christian Science; there the clouds of misinterpretation were too thick to be endured.

Yet even here I observe that—though unthinkable to myself, and even in a sense contrary to that sense of truth that dwells in our souls—Christian science contains too a certain element of that truth, and thus can strengthen and console.

How well I remember, many years ago, sitting listening to the exposition of a devoted Christian Scientist, who tried to convert me to her way of faith. She denied the reality of suffering and pain, and ignored evil, except as a kind of blindness or punishment—her belief, and her descriptions of healings, all left me quite unmoved; and she could not explain satisfactorily even why she went to the dentist, except to keep her mouth clean.

I remember that, thinking me musical, she helped her conversation by playing the piano: thus she talked to an accompaniment. For the cure of a man with a broken leg she played great deep rolling chords; and for the description of a child born blind we had a sentimental treble. How my uncle would

laugh at stories like these ! How many he would tell one himself, bursting into those peals and shouts of laughter that seem more characteristic of him than anything. I have never known anyone who laughed so much, or so delightedly.

I remember about a week before he died coming into his bedroom one evening with my aunt. It was very dark, and he was only just awake from dozing, and in the dim light he could not recognise who we were. "This is Mary—my wife—But who is this? Is it an egg?" And then recognising me, he laughed and laughed over "Is it an egg?" with just that same irresistible laughter that belonged to his vigorous days. It was so utterly infectious that I laugh even now, whenever I think of it.

And in this survey of just one's own world, it is almost impossible to recognise ourselves now as the same people we were at seventeen. So much is different: things that are here now, seem, even in embryo, to be missing then; and other, quite strong things, have utterly died away. This change that is somehow effected in us seems impossible to trace; the hand that has moulded it has worked unseen. No visible human power or influence, no concrete thing, forwards this change; it seems to have no commencement, as no end. Only it happens: we are turned this way or that, we escape from ourselves; we are brought into relation with a different kind of endeavour, a different ideal, we enter a different world.

We can follow our first dumb acceptance of life and its pains; see the disappointments and the unlifted lonelinesses of many years: recognise that this loneliness is perhaps always for human souls the most daunting and baffling of their pains. Yet it is *not* our fellows whom we seek, nor to their sympathy that we turn. We do not dream of finding our release in any human understanding. We search for something totally different; we are conscious it is not here in its completeness, yet we search.

For many years we run into more and more alonenesses: we go where people do not tread.

"How I should love it, if in times to come, I knew you ran into Church in any joy or sorrow. . . ."

Even my uncle, that wizard, did not know how many years this practice had been one's own; even as it is of many persons whose hope and faith are very dim, yet they feel in Church they enter into relation with something greater than man. There one can see more clearly something of that beauty and wisdom which one has surmised, one can gaze upon a complete love—a love that, though it sows peace in our souls, also plants a sword.

At fifty or so one has already lived so long—too long it seems to some people. Too many springs have passed, too many winters and summers, and one could cry, "No more years!" Some people long for the end, not in disheartenment, but for the fulfilment of that expectation in which they seem to have been born.

It is an expectation so totally different from what we know here—the promise of something that has thrown its radiant presence into our lives from the beginning.

Even as children we knew this possibility, this promise; we were on a trembling tiptoe of expectation, a kind of advance guard of beauty announced the reality of its coming. So to some people the path towards old age is all joy. The fulfilment of our expectation is now at last, if not near, at least nearer; and the fear of death is covered by the hope of what may be disclosed.

No words can ever express the marvellousness of what we have seen and known here. What, then, can be the end, the completion, the whole?

Life is so long, but we must not greedily clutch at what we surmise may be in store; we have to wait to receive this wonderful knowledge, so far surpassing all we can gain here.

How almost unbelievably real is the experience in our lives, of something that has prevented and guided us, through temptations and complications, difficulties without number! How too obvious to be unseen or denied, has been the care that has stooped to save us from our weaknesses and faults, countless times!

It is a continual miracle—one we can hardly observe till we are grown old. We are all out to wander, to find some happiness *here*, to discover here

a heaven of endless bliss. And for this hope we run here and there: think we have discovered the reality of it here and now; are defeated in our headlong career by some trifling accident, or by some sudden perception of where we go. Such cruel blows, such destroyed hopes! Yet these can hide within themselves a secret balm.

How humbling it is to see our falsities, our weaknesses, upheld by a strength never our own! How consoling to see that we never achieved our own deliverance, never accomplished any of our ideals, never saved ourselves, but were always saved. We have been the recipients of a care more than personal, wiser than any human care—more persistent, continued, intimate. *Such* a searching care does not exist humanly, yet how close, how completely natural, this care has been. Impossible to trace, always, apparently desirous of being unseen—what is it that has saved us so? Through the queerest happenings, support came to us; dangers are removed towards which we ran. We are *prevented* from running down the primrose way to the eternal bonfire. We have only accepted what has been given, never effected our escape—something always interfered.

We can never, then, think of ourselves with any satisfaction, never feel ourselves complacently superior to any sin, never despise anyone: we are all the same. O let this be our Gospel—that we are the same as those who seem lost with all hands!

For we are just the same as they, only, for some reason we do not see, we have been sheltered, protected, prevented from sins; and our escape is due to God, and not to ourselves. And does God, Who loves all souls equally, let us sit safely while they go to their seeming ruin? The divine Will remains inscrutable to us; we cannot prescribe or divine what God means: yet there are countless suggestions that flit in and out of our minds. In God lie possibilities by which these inequalities are compensated.

Some sort of redress lifts up the souls whose lives here seem a catastrophe: there is an equality in the power to suffer—an equality perhaps in sin; and God allows suffering to compensate; suffering effects much. We cannot understand, but I somehow feel that those whose sins appear so large may yet be in God's bosom before ourselves. For in our hearts is want of charity—and who knows what, in God's eyes, that means? And God effects miracles—He gives, because He wills.

The spirit that steals into us, steals us also away, and will unawares heal and console us, and bring us out simple where we were complicated; and at the last we can hope we shall find this spirit inhabiting us totally—controlling us, inspiring us, working through us. And this grace of the Spirit is not far away, but near; nor is it past, nor to come, but now. We do not need to look back sadly on all we have lost, nor speak as though the love we knew once is gone; nor

need we feel that the love we need is only to *come*, for the everlasting love we know is here now.

The hands that held us, hold us still; the love we knew is increased a hundredfold. And whether we understand its wisdom or lean on it ignorantly, as children do, makes no matter: love itself is enough.

"There is an old belief that on some solemn shore,
Beyond the sphere of grief dear friends shall meet once more.
Beyond the sphere of Time and Sin and Fate's control,
Serene in changeless prime of body and soul.
That creed I fain would keep, that hope I'll ne'er forgo,
Eternal be the sleep if not to waken so!".

JOHN GIBSON LOCKHART.

(*Set by Hubert Parry in "Songs of Farewell."*)

XVI

WITNESSES

Friedrich von Hügel and Hubert Parry

Musician, mystic, scholar, saint. Like the rhyme we say over cherry-stones, these words hop in and out of my mind as I think of my father and my uncle, wondering under which head I will place them, under which name they fit best. And I seem to see that they have something of all four things in them, so that they will fit comfortably in under all four.

For my father, as musician, is also the mystic, pursuing the spirit wherever he goes, touched by the spirit itself; and he is also touched by the scholar, and a little bit of the saint; and my uncle as philosopher is scholar and also mystic, and has also the little piece of the saint, but not the music.

Yet, when I have said that, I remember his reading aloud of his favourite poems of Browning, and St. Augustine's "Confessions"; and I hear again that low and tender voice, tremulous with a kind of rhythmic passion that was certainly music—a different kind of music from my father's, but music too. So that in him, too, there is a touch of music, though not the spirit of music itself.

Oh, if we could but speak in words that *are* pure

music ! But no words can contain that purity of sound that is of a texture both so deep and yet so crystal clear, that notes can seem as the sound of stars breaking together, yet not cold : something of the clearness of ice without its freezingness, the purity of untouched snows, the shape of white colonnades — all *this* is music, but not words.

And in retrospect, if I try in some fashion to sum up my father and my uncle, I seem to see them coming up close together—my father smiling, and my uncle welcoming the fresh and ever-young spirit of my father, of whom he wrote so truly and significantly to me at his death :

" I want to say how deeply I care—how deeply I mind. I have known your father for nearly half a century ; during all that time I have been getting to know fresh people, and have been getting to know those I knew already far more widely and deeply, I believe. And yet I have never before, or during those years, known a man so utterly generous, so essentially lovable, as your father.

" Of course, I know well, besides, that he is a real genius—a genius of a large rare kind—a genius in music. But though I admire this, and I thank God for it, this in itself is nothing lovable. What I love so in him is his radiant lovingness—that rich spending without thought of its being anything other than simply natural, utterly delightful, of a loving heart, upon whomsoever he may meet who at all appeals to it.

"And the appeal is felt to come, not from the apparent cleverness, or riches, or charm, but simply from the fellow-creature's need and cry for help and sympathy—what an untold *world* of kindness and help and warmth he must have given away!"

These words of my uncle's about my father seem to express completely the essential truths and characteristics of my father's nature. How true that is, that it was not for his music one loved him but for himself (do we ever love anyone for what they do?); and again and again my uncle stresses his beauty and purity of character, and his enormous capacity for sympathy and for love.

"How devotedly he loved on from the first unceasingly to the end," he says in another letter; and again: "Such things are not mere accidents: they show a man's nobility of nature."

I seem to find in my uncle's letters all I could say of my father in perfect truth and detachment; and he speaks, too, of that solidity of his character, that steadiness combined with genius, which it is most difficult to find.

In a letter my father wrote me, while I was still quite a child, he speaks remorsefully of his own boyishness; saying that he cannot conquer this spirit in him, which makes him long so much for an out-of-door freedom, for a gallop or a sail; and this, he says wistfully, he must learn to give up, for it is not the life that he must lead. This essential

part of my father's spirit was almost its genius; he seems to irradiate ever in a spontaneous youth and joy; and while he encountered so much difficulty in his life, and worked through so enormous a mass of material, yet this fresh boyishness never got the least clogged or altered, nor deadened by the generous giving of all he had, to his fellow souls.

Who can definitely say what each of these two great spirits brought us? My father with his music, his glowing radiant personality, his rectitude of life (what a power!), and his ardent generous love; and my uncle, whose significance lay perhaps deeper down—in a thousand and one ways of thought, of prayer, of deeply conscious concentration on, and absorption in, the Spirit of God. Who can judge which brought us most?

Both are so full that they complete and illustrate each other: one makes up what the other lacks; and both speak to us solely through their own experience, expressing what they have *lived*; thus they achieve an identity of thought and feeling that commands a complete sincerity.

Both seem as those chosen people of God of whom we read: chosen to come to our rescue, unconsciously fulfilling the task that was set—through the illumination of their own minds and spirits to touch and illuminate our own.

So solidly real is their contribution to the world of spirit that at the end this spirit dominates the whole.

They seem, then, as two large rocks, in a vast sea, on to which we hold; or they are as two ships that come swiftly to us in their loveliness, bringing us consolation, hope, joy, as we lie waterlogged and alone, waiting, as shipwrecked sailors do, for the sight of a sail.

Considered finally, they are too immensely rich, of too great a depth, to sum up; yet we can grasp that they consistently interpret the same Voice, give us different aspects of the same Face; and all through their lives their spirit witnesses to this one Spirit's reality.

The rocks and chasms of their differences are, at the last, swept out of sight in this larger reality. At the end they unite in a wonderful alikeness, what to one were the trackless footsteps of a spirit, and to the other the jewels of a Divine Name.

The world is full of the messages of just people, little contributions continually swell its profound tide—goodnesses that are as "sparks running through dry grass."

Everywhere these sparks and gleams fall, from God's reality, in an overflowing generosity that knows no stint, as the sun shines on the just and the unjust. Our souls note and remember these tokens of God, and when the moment comes that we demand some real proof, some recognisable witness of the Being of God, these they present to us, as in some divine bouquet; through these we are informed of the reality of God.

My uncle taught us the nearness of God and His great difference from ourselves; our dependence on Him, and the testimony and witness of spirit through all the ages. Through a maze of entanglements, following tokens and clues, my uncle emerges with an almost concrete faith—built so solidly, on such sure foundations, yet miraculously holding a divine fire. How clearly, through all his thought and work, through the inspiration and suffering of his mind and soul, my uncle reached his conclusions! And almost first of all comes this solid recognition of our requiring the prosaic and the practical—the solid structure and substance through which can steal the stream of the Spirit, the combined life of Spirit and sense, not Spirit alone—never Spirit alone here. And that the solid logical home of this Spirit is Church—a Church that endures, through its centre of livingness, a centre closely twined into the heart of God. He longed for us to know and realise the greatness of his own Church, whose child he so significantly was; and whose reality, as he taught us, shines through and beyond the limited efforts, the curtailed presentment, of the mind and power of man.

And how much he desired us to recognise and prize *all* the fragments of truth that are scattered in varying largesse all over the world, *all* the efforts of man to seize and express this truth in the widest ways. And that our love of all these efforts and fragments must never confuse their value, must never de-

generate to an indifferent toleration, nor forget the reality of all such difference, nor the reality of sin. For sin and evil are real—it is no use to deny them; we cannot leave them in a kind of negativeness. Alas! they are positive, a horrible power is theirs: we cannot with any truth turn them into any resemblance or shape of good.

Nor could my uncle see or believe in the possibility of any Utopia here; the heaven for which my father vigorously fought is unrealisable *here*. We progress in a general sense, but our progress is very little, very slow. There is a slow uplifting of the average ideal; but we seem ever, even as in each individual soul, bound into the same infirmity: our imperfect personality mounts a little and then falls back. There is no advance beyond what has been in the individual soul.

The very conditions of this earth are obviously too full of faults to produce a perfect heaven, and in the twinkling of an eye, the time of a thought, all our progress is shattered and disappeared.

But the mystery of God remains: the beauties of stars and winds and crashing storms; the mystery of music, of the spirit in man; the endurances and heroisms; the power of suffering and of love. All these are witnesses and testimonies of God; and greatest of these is the love that is anchored in suffering. Widened and deepened in a forgetfulness of self, this love willingly leaves happiness, and finds joy.

Through these various and arresting facts that do not belong to any material order that we know, we are turned to gaze upon some different kind of reality, to recognise the footsteps of some other Presence—the beauty and wonder of a Being we call God.

And man himself can enter into relation with this Personal Being, can become even part in God's vast significance, can give his small share as witness to His reality.

And as each personal soul is precious in the sight of God, so God gives to each soul the power to reach his true home and abiding-place. Through gathering up the crumbs that fall from the table of God, man himself enters his own eternal life.

"And Jesus said unto them, I am the bread of life; he that cometh to me shall never hunger; and he that believeth on me shall never thirst. . . .

"He that believeth on me hath everlasting life. . . . I am the living bread" (St. John vi.).

EPILOGUE

EPILOGUE

Since I finished this short remembrance of my father and my uncle, I have come across a little white notebook belonging to my father, that was hidden away in a box with a lot of old letters, and which now suddenly emerges, dated "Summer Term, 1918"—the summer before he died.[1] This little notebook seems a kind of epitome of my father himself—unconscious evidence of his lifelong endeavour, an intimate expression of his own strenuous life.

It is totally unegotistic, there is no trace of any thought of himself: he is concerned solely with his young friends at the College of whom he thinks, seeking how best to help them; yet through all he says one can trace his own practice and thought, and see in a brilliant illumination what he himself has striven to achieve. Steadfastness and courage, he says in it somewhere, are the first of qualities; and our own aim must be a real endeavour to face facts in a large way, to assimilate new ideas; yet to hold firmly the convictions that can be gathered through the varieties of opportunity, the experience that we gain through life. Yet, he remarks, as our experiences are never the same, and our individu-

[1] These were notes he made for his last address to the students at the Royal College of Music.

alities, too, are different, so we perceive things differently, and our different perceptions will never lead to precisely similar points of view. He considers it of immense value to hold these convictions (the "affirmations" my uncle was always desiring of us) firmly, yet he urges us always to remember that all personal knowledge is of necessity limited; all coloured by our own cast of mind; all subject to an inadequacy that we must always be ready to revise. "So every man has good reason to remain always humble," he remarks in words that might have issued straight from the Baron's mind.

In his talks to these young people, he keeps begging for a mutual understanding between young and old. He speaks of the difficulties that we meet with here: of the old needing constantly to readjust their points of view, and the necessity for them to keep in the closest touch with young minds. How dull and mechanical, he remarks, would be an old person's world—the very thought that so often occurs to oneself!

Only a few of the old could embrace a new idea, adapt themselves quickly to an entirely new life; yet that is the ideal that we must ever keep before us as a possibility, or else we stagnate and become the tiresome critical creatures we all know. The larger experience should give a more tolerant mind, and the thought of older persons should be, not fixed or closed in, but still speculative and fuller

of wisdom; they should achieve a truer balance, and be inspired with a deeper love than the young can know.

These words of encouragement and toleration are very characteristic of my father's mind. They show the continual effort that he made himself to understand different points of view, to receive and admire another kind of expression. He was naturally intolerant, and would burst forth in indignant wrath over purely selfish things, or any sort of falseness or humbug. He hated stupid things, stupid luxuries, stupid selfishness. Yet all this is modified as he gets older; his indignation at what is base is the same, but his remonstrance is more gentle and more wise.

In speaking to the young, he tries to give advice without offending their susceptibilities, to enlighten without any superiority. This effort is particularly touching in him, for he remained himself so eternally young and spontaneous, so quick to see, to like or dislike, this or that. Perhaps it was this that gave him so close an understanding of youth itself; and the endeavour to find a meeting-place between old and young, to obliterate the limiting difficulties, was the result of his own experience of the lack of understanding and inadequacy of older minds. He longed to effect a true sympathy between old and young; he peceived how much each may give and gain from the other, how much each lacks. He

begs the old to remain young in mind, and the young to accept an ordered liberty. He was always greatly desirous of the emancipation of women, and used often to speak with delight of the freedom he saw girls now enjoying; comparing it to the rules and conventions that fettered them in the ancient days of his youth. He loved order, but not a despotic limiting of opportunity—he could not endure a stereotyped monotony.

These reflections are intensely touching, so significant and interpretative of himself, so full of candour and humility, so truly occupied in the feelings and lives of those he sought to help. He longed for a balance of forces, an understanding of different elements, in the various human lives he saw; and almost most of all he would urge upon the young to prepare for old age, to be ready to accept its hindrances, and to make precious memories that they could dwell upon, and that no one could take from them in their old age. He almost *commanded* us to make these occasions of memory; and indeed he was right, for as we grow older we dwell again and again in these memories, and the constrictions of our actual life, or the dulness and sadness by which we *may* be encompassed, are continually not only obscured and absorbed by the reality of our memories, but the memories are so clear and real that their lovely images take complete possession of our minds. We seem so to live in a world that

need never suffer any loss, nor can any change overwhelm our recollection of past love and beauty.

In this little notebook, then, my father's mind lies mirrored—his faith in mankind, his love of his fellows, and most especially his hope for younger souls. His quick and close observation, his intense vitality, his interest in detail, and his accuracy of mind—all these remained freshly his to the last.

He was seventy when he died, yet his mind was ever turning to meet fresh contingencies; and in almost prophetic words he speaks of the possibility of a sudden change, an acceleration of what, hitherto, had been the gradual process of development, of a manifest difference in point of view, and in way of living, that were coming, not slowly—but, as it were, in a thunderclap. The old might be obliged to face new things quite suddenly, he said—things to which we usually become adapted to, by a slow change, developing through many years.

We see how my father, through faithful courage and honesty, effected a change in his own nature: he is mellowed and patient where before he was quick and decided; and the temper, once hasty and headlong, has been so completely conquered that its very shadow has disappeared.

To the last his austerity towards sin and evil remain the same; he hated iniquity, and endured with a stern and logical stoicism the law of cause and effect. How much he used to speak to me,

when I was a child, of this ineluctable law through which we cannot escape the fruit and consequence of sin. Here he joins hands again with the Baron, who so continually insisted on our recognising the abiding consequences of sin. My uncle spoke so often of how this crucial part of Christ's message had almost been obliterated in modern times; yet in leaving out what is so truly inevitable we denude Christ of part of His reality. His message from God was not only a message of reassurance and hope, of an eternal love—but also an insistence on the significance of our choice, here and now, between good and evil. An immense warning, as my uncle would say, colours and runs through all our Lord's words; and we cannot ignore its presence in the face of the reality of God.

My father braced souls by his sympathy and understanding, by his sense of their needs, and by the value he set on all effort to achieve. His vivid interest and sympathy gave hope and support to the solitary, and his unconsciousness of himself was so complete that it seemed to him only natural and ordinary to give all he had to his friends.

Yet with all his deep convictions, his burning enthusiasms, he managed to escape the snare and pitfall into which so many generous rebels and reformers seem to fall.

He never insisted on his own point of view, nor desired to dominate in conversation or argument:

never trumpeted his own faith with a boring insistency. Nor did he counter a less fluent knowledge or a fuller recognition of many facts, with a brilliant and facile irony. Both my uncle and he were incapable of this littleness, which, alas! so often dogs the footsteps of people otherwise truly great.

How moving it is to read these unconsciously final thoughts, the last and touching expression of this ever young, ever joy-giving mind and heart.

For unconsciously this little notebook reveals my father very intimately: it is so straight out of my father's self, so freshly and directly from his mind, that one feels one has been sitting with him, talking to him just lately, listening again to those eager thoughts and ideals that he loved so to explore with us, in a happy ardour and hope.

And if, in some rough way, I try to collect my impressions, to make a comparison between what I see here, and what I remember of that young and happy figure, the treasured companion of my childhood and youth, I see the difference seems to lie simply in the *growth* of all that was best in him, and the eradication of what was at fault.

There is no trace of any change but this; he remains ever the same, only deeper and more mature. Perhaps the years have stolen away some of his buoyancy; in its place there is a larger peace. His understanding is far wider, his judgment steadier, and his love more true and deep. He is more

pensive and thoughtful, more solid, perhaps, in his personality, than when in youth he adventured forth to meet, to test, so many thoughts and ideals. Yet old age never touched him, he never built barriers against youthful enthusiasm; and to the end he loved risk and danger, loved the glorious tumult of storms, of winds and sea.

Nor can I think that loving heart, that intense delight, that vivid spirit, as ended, or destroyed by death. Rather the eternal seems to enter and meet him, as he lived stirred by and steeped in its sense.

He has passed into a complete realisation of what he lived in here, sought and adored.

There is no severance between our state now and to come, the future life breaks in upon our today; and our departure from here is no sudden end, but a hidden journey through the time we know, into time spread out in some unchangeable horizon.

We are not divided from eternal life, but eternal life is here in our present time, dwelling in the moment, as a seed is in a flower; we enter everlastingness as we are born. So my father seems to achieve his complete self, enters a fuller eternity.

And he possessed, in its fulness, that temper of joy that my uncle spoke of as one of the attributes of the saint.

Indeed, I can never think of him without joy entering my mind: nor see any beauty, nor hear

the harsh, insistent murmur of the sea, without an intense perception of his spirit piercing the day.

Nor can I read any of the rejoicing Psalms, nor the words of Job or Isaiah, without perceiving how close his kinship was to these; somehow their knowledge, and love and joy, seems to have overflown into his happy soul.

Yet we see that this vivid bliss had its shadowed counterpart, when his spirit entered darknesses like Saul's.

His joy was not a perpetual day of light, the hope that inspired his being could shrink and dwindle to a fluttering flame; and in the chambers of his soul he would wrestle with a sorrowful self.

These sufferings, these deep and dark abysses, seem almost a necessary element in every nature that is great; adding a mysterious something to their force, and giving the texture of reality to their joy.

The clouds often cover the stars, yet the stars, as my father used to say, always remain. They shine on brilliantly, securely, behind the clouds—and we see them again. . . .

*Joy, shipmate, joy!**

* Walt Whitman.

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